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NEW STATESMAN

A bitter taste of life under the Tories

Arthur Koestler

The making of Darkness at Noon

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Mike Phillips

Cuba's impact on the Caribbean

Czechoslovaks remember Prague Spring

The danger of the French connection

Eric Varley told the House of Commons on 16 December 1975 that he could not be taken for an expensive ride by the Chrysler Corporation: 'Part of the support operation' he said, 'was to ensure that Chrysler UK would be firmly locked into the world-wide operations of the Chrysler Corporation'. As last week's decampment shows, very little integration occurred. Denis Healey was equally ebullient at the time about the deal Harold Lever had pulled off: 'I think the really impressive thing about the Chrysler deal is that Chrysler, under a tough money-minded boss, have decided to back the plan with their own money.' The same boss is now heading off with £50m of the taxpayers' money, £200m of Peugeot's and not a single committment to the 23,000 employees he is leaving behind. The truth is that the 1975 deal was unenforceable – therefore it should never have been struck. It is almost impossible to check whether a multinational company is keeping its word. The accounting systems are so full of price and debt transfers that no realistic outside examination is feasible. Even now, nobody knows exactly how much Chrysler has invested in the UK since 1975. Of the new models that were promised in the declaration of intent, none has involved major redesigning or funding: they have all been little more than old models with facelifts. The generally dismissive attitude which Chrysler employs towards Britain is all too evident: for example, the full cost of developing and producing the new Alpine model has been written off in the UK accounts, although the car was actually produced in France.

No doubt the Cabinet was right to agree in 1975 to cover Chrysler UK's future losses – even though it learnt of Chrysler's decision to pull out of Britain via a Detroit press conference. But what was senseless was the Government's refusal to take an equity stake in the company. We now seem, ludicrously, to be about to exchange one form of external control for another.

For Peugeot-Citroen, Britain is the weak link of the three Chrysler divisions it is buying. Peugeot, poorly unionised, has already implemented large-scale redundancies to put Citroen back into profit. Its executives may look upon surplus, unionised, under-capitalised British factories as an expendable commodity – the price they had to pay for a quarter of the Spanish market, Chrysler France and access to Chrysler's American dealers. At best, Chrysler UK can hope to be functioning in five years as an assembly point for cars designed in France.

The British unions are divided in their response. Some want to extract details from Peugeot on its commitment to Britain before taking a position. Others say efforts should instead be made to discuss with British Leyland the possibility of a merger. Leyland is beginning to look like a minnow in the international car pool, where economies of scale and massive interchange of components are crucial prerequisites for success. Chrysler has a superb British design team, good machine tool engineering and a management team that has never had a chance, in the shadow of Detroit, to prove its value. If Leyland is not be left producing 800,000 cars annually against Peugeot's 2.2m and Ford and Renault's 1.6m., an expansion must be examined urgently. There is no valid reason why a state-run car company should not flourish in Britain, given the right sort of impetus, just as others do in Europe.

But if that chance is missed again and Peugeot-Citroen gets its way, then Eric Varley should make sure this time that he heeds the advice given to the government by Chrysler shop stewards in 1975. 'Any national government taking on a multinational company like Chrysler must have the will to take it into effective control and then to plan in the interests of social requirements. Otherwise it will only be a matter of time before the same problems arise yet again.'

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Notes on Politics and Power

Financing free enterprise

Glen Davis writes: Mrs Thatcher's attempts to balance the books of the Conservative Party will be thrown completely out of kilter by the anticipated £2m. election advertising campaign now starting. Figures prepared by the Labour Research Department on companies' political contributions show clearly how the campaign will be financed by business – sometimes via the conduit of a fund-raising 'front', British United Industrialists (BUI).

Extravagant expenditure is nothing new for the Conservatives – in 1970 they outspent Labour by 8 to 1. The cost of fighting that election put them £352,573 into the red, while the two 1974 elections left a massive deficit of £1,281,872. Despite a series of appeals and cut-backs since the late sixties, it is only recently that Tory finances have begun to stabilise. Even so, last year's expenditure was again in deficit.

In 1967, constituencies raised £587,000, as opposed to £1.6m. accounted for by Central Office. Some £620,000 of this was in direct donations from big business interests, with insurance and engineering firms making the largest gifts, while another £400,000 went via BUI and similar fronts. Since 1967, companies' financial returns have had to list political donations. Some companies – such as Marks and Spencer who last year gave BUI £20,000 – prefer to give to such supposedly 'non-political' organisations.

BUI is a low profile secretive organisation, based at 140 Park Lane with a tiny staff. Its aims are to 'promote the interests of free enterprise', which it does by passing the £450,000 raised this year elsewhere. 'Most of this' according to current BUI Chairman Sir Ralph Bateman (formerly chairman of Turner and Newall) goes to the Conservative Party, with the balance to other 'free enterprise' groups. There are, Bateman admitted last week, 'substantial' sums passed to the Economic League, and lesser amounts to groups like the National Association for Freedom. The organisation is not registered as a company – 'to keep out the snoopers' – and is governed by a council of 15 invited industrialists. Their names are kept confidential, but two who are known to be currently serving are Sir John Clark (Chairman of Plessey) and Sir Humphrey Prideaux (Brooke Bond). They 'work very closely' with the more overt Aims of Industry organisation. New figures for the level of companies' donations to these organisations (below) show a marked increase during the '74 elections, all of it directed against Labour in one way or another.

Political donations by quoted companies (£'000)

	73/4	74/5	75/6	76/7	77/8
Cons. Pty.	455	895	591	619	748
BUI	254	557	391	405	452
Aims of Industry	31	129	47	16	30

Most companies defend such political donations as a bastion against nationalisation. The major banks have spent an estimated £980,000 on newspaper advertisements alone in the course of their spree, and the current Campaign Against Building Industry Nationalisation, headed by Laing and Taylor Woodrow (who last year gave £15,000 to the Conservative party and a further £15,000 to BUI) seems set to spend a great deal more. One effect of this has been a tailing off of donations between elections, causing instability in Tory accounts. And as more industries are nationalised, fewer and fewer will receive the Tories when they go cap in hand.

After the party had lost in 1974, donations fell back to the £1.5m. mark, and Lord Thorneycroft, the new chairman, launched a fresh appeal to raise income to £3m. But by January 1975 the party was in evident financial difficulties, and was forced to cut back on Central Office staff. By August 1975, it was apparent that the appeal was failing, and by November, the Party was losing £75,000 per month, while reserves had fallen to £270,000 – a situation which needed desperate remedies. By March 1976 the drain on reserves had stopped, and although in 1976-7 there was again a loss, of £82,740, reserves were over £677,000.

Doubtless at this very moment, General Wyldbore-Smith, the Director of the Conservative Board of Finance, is once again approaching businessmen for a whip round; doubtless once again they are reaching into their pockets. Even without an election, it now costs the Tories around £2m. p.a. to keep up Central Office and their 350 agents around the country. On top of that, it seems that they envisage spending over £2m. in anticipation of an autumn election. Do they really have the money to spend? Or, as last time, will they end up well in the red?

Ethnic aspirations

Godfrey Hodgson writes: A number of studies have confirmed the widespread steretotype that, in contrast to West Indians and their children who tend to be under-achievers at school, Asian children perform as well as or better than English children. Two new studies from the Midlands, from Leicester and Walsall, both done under the auspices of the Commission for Racial Equality by local community relations groups, document the intensity of Asian immigrants' faith in education. They also leave an uncomfortable impression that high hopes pinned by Asian immigrants in the British education system are doomed to disappointment.

The most striking single set of findings comes from Leicester. One year after they left school in 1975, 87 per cent of white boys and 79 per cent of white girls in the Leicester sample had found jobs. 7 per cent of white boys and 8 per cent of white girls were unemployed. And only 6 per cent of the boys and 13 per cent of the girls were in further education. In contrast, 62 per cent of Asian boys and 47 per cent of Asian girls were in further education. Overall, 55 per cent of the Asian school leavers as against only 8 per cent of the English went on to full time further education.

Moreover, a far higher proportion of the Asians were in full time courses, whereas many of the whites were being sent along for one day a week, or for evening classes. More than half of the Asian students were doing academic courses – A levels, O levels or the Certificate of Further Education. The survey comments that 'a disturbing feature' was the number of Asians who were doing courses leading to qualifications of 'debatable value.' So many Asian students wanted to study in the Leicester colleges that the further education system in the city is unable to cope with the demand, and Asian students are being 'bused' to colleges 10 or 15 miles away, in some cases producing a racialist reaction from some white students there.

The Walsall study confirmed the general pattern discovered in Leicester, with a far higher proportion of Asians staying on in further education, often because they were unable to find jobs without formal qualifications. The CRE comments in an introduction to the report that, whilst white working class school leavers are socialised into 'realistic' job aspirations within the context of available jobs on the local labour market, Asians aspire to jobs higher up the occupational hierarchies. Unfortunately there is an abundance of evidence to suggest that, because of discrimination, even if their aspirations are higher, their real prospects are poorer than those of their white contemporaries. It looks as though the colleges of further education are protecting the Asians' illusion that this is an 'opportunity society' for them. That illusion is not likely to be long-lived.

Judges won't be trained

John Griffith writes: In August 1976 the Working Party on Judicial Training and Information, chaired by Lord Justice Bridge, circulated a consultative paper and received comments back from 77 assorted judges, and a number of individuals. The Working Party has now published their Report. The attitude of many judges in their comments is more unbelievable than even the most sceptical critics of the judiciary could have expected.

Nowadays, the average number of annual first appointments to judicial office is between 60 and 80, most of whom are made part-time judges, known as Recorders. The total number of judges who sit in the Crown Court (for criminal cases) exceeds 1000. About 350 of these are full-time High Court and Circuit judges, appointed at the rate of about 25 each year.

Some judges appointed to hear criminal cases have had very little experience of criminal law or sentencing. The Working Party was set up primarily to find ways of improving the training of judges.

Many judges, it seems, positively resented the idea that they were less than perfectly equipped. The Report noted that: 'We had to face a widely felt and strongly voiced objection to the use of the phrase 'judicial training'. It is said that 'training' implies that there are 'trainers', who can train people to be judges. This must represent a threat to judicial independence. Those of the stature and experience to fit them for appointment as judges will resent the implication that they need to be 'trained'.'

So the Working Party, faced with this battery of objection from the bench to the idea that anyone could conceivably be in need of instruction in sentencing, dropped 'training' from their title and replaced it with 'studies'. But unsatisfied judges went further yet, claiming 'common sense and forensic experience as

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the sole legitimate sources of wisdom'. They characterised the Working Party's proposals as a waste of public time and money.

The consultative paper had suggested a three to four weeks' judicial training course for all new judges. But many who offered their comments argued that the Working Party underestimated the capacity of judges to make good gaps in their knowledge by the process of self-tuition. That seems to add a new and terrifying meaning to 'trial and error'.

'A heavy preponderance of adverse comment' was that three to four weeks' training was too long. It would be difficult for judges 'to maintain interest for such a period' on account of their 'intellectual calibre'. Worse still, Recorders and Deputy Circuit Judges in training would have 'either to leave their practices or to sacrifice part of their vacation . . . a disincentive to accepting appointment'.

Some judges dismissed any concern with theoretical questions related to sentencing and the penal system as 'unnecessary and unhelpful'. There was a recurring theme that a judge's 'robust common sense (was) liable to be distorted or impaired if he is required to study the learning and opinions of experts in subjects other than his own'. Battered and bruised, the Working Party still managed to put together a few recommendations, none of which is likely ever to be implemented. Much sentencing will continue to be random, uninformed and crude. The Royal Commission on Legal Services, now sitting, may consider these matters. Or would judges also object to the notion that they provide legal services?

Agee in Havana

Brian Wilson writes: Philip Agee – now banned from five West European countries – was recently in Havana as a guest at the World Festival of Youth, and was a central figure of attention. Anyone who believed that the harassment he has experienced would seriously hamper his work or crush his spirit must be sadly disappointed. Journalists queued to interview him, and to invite his opinion on whether it was likely that the CIA was involved in this or that plot. He is the most celebrated of the growing band of former CIA gamekeepers who have turned to poaching.

He now has permission to stay in Italy. A book he has co-edited on the CIA in Western Europe, 'Dirty Work', has just been published, with particular emphasis on Spain and Portugal. He is closely involved in a new Washington magazine, 'Covert Action Information Bulletin' – which made its debut during the festival. His latest project is a directory of CIA operatives throughout the world.

Agee's expulsion from Britain has confirmed our image in many countries as the willing servant of the United States, it seemed in Havana. The story of 'Three Wise Men' presiding over a secret hearing, at which the defendants had not been told the charges they were supposed to be answering, has reverberated round the world.

Agee would like to re-visit Britain, but 'I know there is very little chance of that as long as Rees is Home Secretary.' His two teenage sons are apparently regarded as a threat to British safety – when they returned to Britain to collect their belongings they were first told to leave within 24 hours. On his last night in Amsterdam, before expulsion there, he was remarried. 'You've got to be resident somewhere to be married. And I didn't know when I might qualify again.' Philip Agee, with his wife and sons in Havana, shows no signs of cracking under the strain. CIA training may be standing him in good stead.

James Fenton:

The spectre of Nazi justice

I thought that Richard Crossman and his cronies spent the war preparing propaganda designed to encourage German soldiers to desert. Indeed, I seem to recall a case in which a particularly lubricious set of leaflets (depicting the soldiers' wives back home in the embraces of – was it SS officers?) was floated out by air balloon over the Channel, but unfortunately ended up on a golf course somewhere in the south of England. The leaflet caused something of a scandal in the War Office. Wasn't this taking things a little far? Crossman escaped from the situation in a masterful way. Don't you see he explained, this is not British black propaganda, but German black propaganda designed to discredit our department. A typical Goebbels trick.

At all events, it was surely considered a good thing if German soldiers deserted. Why then did the British allow a German military tribunal to sentence deserters to death three months after the end of the war? I know that British history has become quite shockingly uncontroversial, but it would be nice to have an answer. It would be interesting to know, for instance, whether the British knew what was going on, whether they approved, and to what extent Hans Filbinger was typical of navy field judges of the time.

In Germany the controversy over the Filbinger case shows no sign of dying. One's point of view is to a great extent determined by age and background. Manfred Rommel, the Mayor of Stuttgart pointed out to me that navy justice during the war did tend to be stricter than that of the other services: it was the navy who mutinied at the end of the First World War and spearheaded the German revolution. This was a recent memory, and a notorious one. The authorities did not want any repetition of the 'stab in the back'.

A naval officer from Hamburg remembered the period slightly differently. He said that morale at sea tended to be better than that of the army because of the fact that officers and ratings shared the same danger. If the ship went down, you all went down. And so the idea of desertion was more shocking to a navy man than to anybody else. At the end of the war, the navy was taken over in good working order. He himself had continued to serve for two years under British command. He said, quite intriguingly, that during this period it was assumed by him and his fellows that they were being kept for an eventual war against the Russians. If this was indeed a general assumption, the idea of war-time discipline seems perhaps slightly less odd.

An infantry captain, now a lawyer, remembers meeting Filbinger in Flensburg during the period in question. He describes him as having been a typical, upright, correct German judge. But he pours scorn on all Filbinger's excuses for his behaviour. For a start, he says that Filbinger was not obliged to pass or demand death sentences against deserters during the last period of the war. At that time men were badly needed, and in the infantry most deserters were sent to the front line. Secondly, the worst that could have happened to Filbinger had he got on the wrong side of the Nazis was that he himself would have been sent to the front. If Filbinger had said, 'I did this because I was afraid of fighting', he would believe him. But not otherwise.

Nor can he believe that Filbinger forgot the death sentences he was involved in. In one case, Filbinger witnessed the execution. My friend the lawyer had also seen an excution, and he said he could not sleep afterwards (he was not unused to the sight of blood - he himself was wounded eight times). Finally, in the two 'phantom judgments' (Filbinger's notorious phrase – the men were sentenced to death *in absentia*) which took place after the end of the war, the lawyer cannot see the legal justification. Military law serves the purpose of *Abschreckung* (deterrence). But who was supposed to be deterred from what, when the war was already over?

After the first case (the only one involving an execution) Filbinger said that he had been involved in no other death sentences. Then came the two 'phantom judgments'. Filbinger said that he should have added '. . . as far as I can remember'. Okay, said the Christian Democrats but that's your lot. No more death sentences, for crying out loud. Then came the fourth case, dating from August 1943. The charge was looting. It appears that the sailor in question stole the following items from a bomb damaged drugstore: three pots of nivea, two toothbrushes, two bottles of eau-de-cologne, three pots of creme, four bottles of hair oil, four packets of blue wax, four or five lipsticks, 41 or 42 films, and a packet containing around 50 contraceptives. Filbinger was prosecutor and demanded the death sentence. It was this case which brought about his resignation last week.

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What would life be like under the Tories?

Some in Britain have already had the unwelcome experience of a Tory takeover. As the general election nears, PATRICK WINTOUR and FRANCIS WHEEN report on the fate of three recent local authority 'captures' – Nottingham, Wandsworth and the GLC – to see what is in store.

1. GLC: Cutler's sale of the century flops

Horace Cutler celebrates the first council house sales since the Tories took over the Greater London Council

The Conservatives' commitment to selling council houses on the cheap is not just crude political bribery. They envisage the sales as a major piece of social engineering. *The Right Approach to the Economy* puts it this way: 'We would like to see the habit of personal accumulation, making vast numbers of people owners as well as earners, much more deeply ingrained in our society . . . obviously the ownership of one's own home is one of the most important expressions of the idea of individual ownership.' By selling council houses to members of the working class, the Tories hope to give them a personal stake in society of a kind which will encourage more proprietorial and conservative attitudes.

But owner occupation is not the Tories' only motive for the sales; if it were, their promise to give council tenants a statutory right to purchase would have been extended to the private sector. They are also seeking to reduce the influence of the state. One immediate effect of their policy is to cut down the number of houses allocated according to need. Eventually it will lead to a tenure system divided between a 'normal majority' in owner occupation and an abnormal residue left in council housing of too poor a quality to be sold.

Last year just 12,500 council houses were sold but no-one is trying harder than GLC leader Horace Cutler to push this year's figure nearer the 1973 peak of 46,000. The GLC Tories plan to sell 10,000 houses by next April; they then intend to concentrate on the problems of the inner city. No new council houses will be built in the outer suburbs, thus putting a stop to what they see as political colonisation, and inner city housebuilding will be halved. The GLC will retire from house management altogether by transferring in spring 1979 the remaining part of its housing stock to the London boroughs. The nineteen Tory controlled boroughs will then continue Horace Cutler's 'Sale of the Century'.

So far, though, the sale has been a flop. By 20 June, only 1,000 sales had been completed. Desperate to keep to their timetable, the Tories are making purchase increasingly easy. Originally discounts on purchase were given only to tenants of at least ten years standing; now only two years is adequate qualification for 20 per cent off. All GLC property has been put up for sale now, not just the 70,000 houses and cottages originally offered: £2.25m. worth of estate agents', surveyors' and solicitors' services have been hired to speed up sales; £250,000 is being spent on publicity; and houses are being allowed onto the open market after a shorter period of consideration. Cutler tried to fix it so that any tenant could buy a ten year purchase option on his home for £10, thus making it impossible for any Labour administration to reverse the policy, but fortunately the scheme was blocked by Peter Shore. Now Cutler is trying to sell three-year options at £5 a time, despite Ministerial directives that this too is illegal. All in all it has cost the GLC on average £21,000 per house to find a purchaser. That hardly adds up to efficient estate agency.

The logic of the sales is causing ever greater absurdities. Cutler has decreed that half of the GLC property falling vacant every year must be sold; since the half allocated for relets has already been filled this year, no further vacant property can be relet. Yet over 1,000 houses are already boarded and empty, pending possible sale. They represent a loss of £400,000 in unpaid rents and rates, plus bills for security. An increasing number are vandalised. Under Labour, 23,000 families received transfers in three years. Now – as a direct result of the sales – the GLC has decreed that only the top priority families (severely overcrowded or medically needy) of the 38,000-strong transfer list can have any hope of success.

To justify what George Tremlett, the leader of the GLC housing committee has described as the most substantial shift in housing policy in 40 years, the GLC last year produced a document called *Inner London Must Live*. Written after the decision to sell houses had been made, it attempts to dress a predetermined policy in respectable statistical clothing. It asserts that London's housing shortage has almost disappeared and implies that there will be a surplus of dwellings over households of 220,000 by 1986.

Remarkably, the document was not written by the Policy Studies and Intelligence Branch which usually produce such strategic reports. The PSIB refused, on the ground that it could not make the facts fit the desired conclusion. So the task was left to the Housing Policy unit, the executive arm of Tremlett's committee, led by Alex Grey.

The document ignores the work of Bernard Crofton, a housing research officer employed by the London Boroughs' Association. When it counts the number of 'concealed households', it excludes 32,000 single-parent families sharing with relatives and friends, and 40,000 single-parent families who do not have exclusive occupation of any one room. By making the arbitrary assumption that 75 per cent of the remaining one-person households would be willing to share accommodation, Tremlett's document strikes another 115,000 households off the list.

Nick Raynsford, director of Shelter's Housing Action Centre in London has been particularly venemous in his attack on Tremlett, pointing out that the GLC had used outdated population statistics for emigration from London. At the time the document was written they were known to be misleading by the GLC's statisticians who were working on new projections revised on the basis of the last three year's experience. Tremlett did not wait; if he had, the fresh figures would have shown that there were likely to be between 294,000 and 369,000 more people in London than previously suggested. They transform Tremlett's housing surplus into a deficit.

Cutler has argued in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* that he will be able to sell flats. Yet no council has had success in selling flats before, least of all the GLC.

Between 1967 and 1973 the Tories sold

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precisely two blocks of flats and 16,000 houses. Research by Alan Murie and Ray Forrest of the Birmingham Centre for Urban Studies shows that Birmingham Tories sold 10,000 council houses in the five years after 1966, of which 98 per cent had gardens. Of 40,000 flats on the market, just *four* were sold. The most popular houses were on the peripheral outer estates; the typical purchaser tended to be a 'middle aged long standing tenant with an above average income'. The same trend can already be seen in London. At a rate of about four per cent a year, these houses slip into the private market through resale mainly to a younger group. The council's capacity to provide transfers for existing tenants and homes for those on the waiting list is correspondingly reduced.

Cutler also claims that the sale of 50,000 council houses would save the GLC £20m. a year. Examining a similar claim by Leeds council (that it could knock £1m. off the rates over three years by selling 5,000 houses), Bernard Kilroy points out in *Roof* magazine that Leeds had looked only at the short-term economies of the sale and had assumed that council rents would rise at half the rate of inflation. In fact, says Kilroy, the rents had risen at double the rate of inflation over the past 30 years; if Leeds had based its estimate on that record, the amount saved by selling houses would have been outweighed by loss of income from rents. Far from gaining from the sale, Leeds will actually lose £8m.

George Tremlett, GLC housing spokesman

Cutler's estimates are similarly bogus. He assumes that he will be able to sell all the houses he wants to; and he fails to mention that the only houses which find ready buyers are the old ones, which have small debt charges outstanding and thus bring a surplus to the council's housing revenue account. Finally, Cutler blandly assumes that he won't have to replace (at high cost) any of the council houses he has sold.

2. Nottingham: Stifled community groups are forced to learn their place

Perhaps the most striking local example of Thatcherism in action is to be found in Nottingham where the Conservatives won control of the district council on 10 May 1976 and a year later captured the county council. The Tories shadow environment spokesmen, particularly Hugh Rossi, have repeatedly held up the Tories of Nottingham as the example other Conservative councils should follow. Yet in two years the Tories have torn apart Nottingham's housing strategy by adding 6,000 to the 4,000-strong waiting list and by promising to build 22,000 fewer houses by 1982 than the previous Labour administration had planned. In addition, they have repeatedly interfered in the running of the county's schools and, under the guise of public accountability, have harrassed the voluntary and community groups which receive council funds.

The Nottingham Tenants' and Residents' Association has been infuriated by the manner in which Jack Green, the Tory leader, has justified his housing policy; he announced, for example, that 'only 400 people' on his ever-expanding waiting list were 'in real need', since the bulk of the list was made up of unmarried people, people who were looking for better accommodation and men in the Forces anticipating discharge. So if you're single (perhaps with a family) or living in overcrowded conditions, you're not in real need according to the Tories. Green plans to build just 504 houses in the next three years and none in 1982. His policy instead is to sell 10,000 of the council's 50,000 houses and he has already got rid of 3,000.

The Tories jubilantly claim that this amounts to a capital realisation of £22m. and a gain of £7.77m. over the original cost of providing the homes. It has meant, however, keeping 1,000 houses empty, leaving 7,000 slums to clear and 11,000 properties in need of improvement. It has done nothing to add to the total housing stock. The Labour Party had planned to launch a massive clearance programme and build 1,700 council houses per year. In 1976 the Government decided that Nottingham's housing was poor enough to be one of the 20 areas protected from the effect of the cuts in construction expenditure.

But the council, by its own admission and against its own stated principles, is still moving families with young children into high rise flats because of the shortage of council houses. Few qualifications are needed to buy a council house from the Tories – apart from an ability to pay. The council's 100 per cent mortgages are outside the reach of the poor, the disabled and the old, even though many of the houses are being sold below cost price. Worse, the council is selling off land to private developers under partnership schemes whereby ratepayers bear the cost of developing the land (a subsidy to the private sector of over £60,000 an acre) and the council stipulates what is to be built. Private builders normally find they can't make sufficient profit by building working class homes in inner city areas, so Nottingham council has had to sell the land very cheaply. Houses and flats are then built below local authority standards. In the process, the council loses both a capital asset and control over an inner city area – all to satisfy the ideological motive that state involvement in house building is wrong.

A local magazine *Housing Action* has led the attack on the council's housing policies, using the printing facilities of a community organisation called the Nottingham Area Project (NAP). Last month NAP had its £40,000 Urban Aid Grant withdrawn by the county council social services committee. It closed on 31 July. Since more than 60 community groups depended on NAP as a resource centre, the council has effectively silenced a large section of working class Nottingham.

The council set up NAP four years ago to combat the city's increasing delinquency rate and to plug the gaps in the county's probationary services. Rapidly NAP expanded into a community project concerned with urban deprivation and with (in the words of social services director Norman Caudell) 'the problem of powerlessness experienced by people and with the establishment of control of their own destinies.' In 1976, NAP ceased to be run by a management committee of local government officers and was devolved into five elected neighbourhood committees. It was up to the people of the five areas to decide what issues were important and to press their area worker into action. Each neighbourhood had a grant of £800 a year, with a central office providing information, duplicating and printing facilities and a management committee. The local autonomy worked. Playgroups, broadsheets, tenants' associations, pressure groups – all mushroomed.

In response to demand from the new Tory council, NAP agreed to a larger local authority presence on its main committee, (although one of the councillors already entitled to attend, Mr Tildesley, had turned up precisely once in two years); it also conceded that the council could appoint staff and that the social services officer should have a more important role in the organisation. But after all the compromises, a deadlock was reached over finance. NAP's grant from the council was officially monitored but it refused to reveal, as matter of principle, the sources of other funds received by neighbouring groups, insisting that the council should seek that information directly from the groups.

As a result, the council voted on 21 June to withdraw NAP's grant. The Deputy leader of the council explained: 'It's not our job to encourage political infiltration . . . I get disturbing reports of a number of things printed at this office at Mansfield Road (NAP's headquarters) . . . What benefit can it be for ratepayers when it might be used for political purposes? . . . They are ridiculing housing departments and local government and this is where they expect to get their money from.' It seemed to have escaped the Tories' notice that it was the council itself which had given NAP the role of encouraging community self-expression.

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Our ref. 2DD/BH/MA

Please ask for
Mr. Notley
Ext. 4075

Date
22nd June 1978

Mr. Wyn Williams,
Nottingham Areas Project,
116 Mansfield Road,
Nottingham.

Dear Mr. Williams,

Nottingham Areas Project

I write to let you know that the Social Services Committee at their meeting yesterday decided that no further grant be given to the project.

Yours sincerely,

Director.

The Right Approach **talks of the narrow and intolerant breed of state socialism that has developed in Britain and promises a break for freedom. The Tories of Nottingham have already made their dash. Here the Caunton Avenue Flat Tenants' Association, among others, protest outside County Hall at the closure of the Nottingham Area Project. Right – the generous letter of dismissal.** *Photo John Birdsall.*

NAP is by no means the only group to be treated in this way by the council. In return for grants of as little as £50 the council are now demanding seats on the management committees of summer play-schemes. The county council instigated its own inquiry into the progressive Sutton Centre School (NS 9 January) after a class was given on the meaning of swearing. Further questions are now being raised about sex education and a religious education course entitled *Quest* has been denounced on the ground that it mentions Marxism. Community teachers are being phased out. Peter Wright, the county council leader, questioned whether the Council for Voluntary Service had its priorities right in providing for a homosexual advice centre and a youth counselling service which, he said, 'encouraged' abortion.

The Tories have reversed a Labour decision to request Home Office funding for West Indian and Asian centres; they will agree to cover the capital but not the running costs. They have thrown the Labour members off the management committee of the Community Relations Council and then refused to grant the CRC's request for a lease on the (council-owned) building it was using, attacking the CRC for displaying certain posters. 'How can this local authority support an organisation that gives support to cut-throats in Rhodesia and their *ilk in Chile – groups that have been condemned* by all reasonable people?' demanded Councillor Philip Owen. Another Tory Stuart Thompson concurred 'you don't have to live in a cesspit to smell it'. After the abuse, in fact, the CRC got another building. The 600-strong Basford Tenants' Action Group came in for similar treatment. They were thrown out of one building, then offered partial access to a room in the Basford Estate's hall. The Housing Committee Chairman Mr Hickey was round at the estate one day, when he peered through a window to see a poster which read: 'The council regrets that due to the interests of big business they are unable to fulfil their obligations to the homeless this year.' Hickey told the estate's caretaker to let council officials into the building and they then proceeded to go through the group's files. Two days later they photographed the files, again without permission or knowledge of the tenants. Immediately afterwards the Action Group was barred from the room, at which point its members occupied the building. Their protest lasted seven weeks, until they were lured out by a promise that the decision would be reviewed. Their future, like NAP's, still hangs in the balance.

3. Wandsworth: Social services near breaking point as private sector booms.

'For seven long wasted years our Labour councillors have reshaped our borough on the lines of their Marxist socialist theories.' A manifesto couched in emotive prose and a commitment to hold down the rates enabled the Wandsworth Tories to sweep to power in the May elections. Since then the new leaders have set about destroying the most worthwhile innovations of the 'wasted years' in an astonishingly ham-fisted and insouciant fashion. Moreover their determination not to increase the rates has led them to economise dangerously.

Wandsworth's social services, which had built up an impressive reputation, are now near breaking point. The previous Labour council allowed the department to overspend its budget and then footed the bill. The Conservatives have put a stop to all that, even though the social services budget of £17 millions is 20 per cent less per person than the inner London average; the number of jobs in the department had risen to 1,850 but the budget is enough for only 1,600. As a result all vacant posts (of which there were 260) have remained unfilled. The council's excellent free child-minding service for 'priority one' children – those at risk of being battered, those from deprived backgrounds or single parent families – has also suffered; before the election 340 children had been placed with minders but the Tories have now *ordered that this number must be reduced* to 250 through 'natural wastage'.

Morale among social workers is low. The local Nalgo branch has refused to cover for the unfilled vacancies, with the result that social services offices in Tooting and Battersea are now closed on certain days of the week. Preventive social work – such as home visiting – has been abandoned altogether. Many social workers fear that it is only a matter of time before a child-battering tragedy drags their case on to the front pages of the tabloids and that it will take such a disaster before the council pauses for a moment to consider the human cost of its penny-pinching.

The council provides £1 million in grants for voluntary and community projects and has now asked its Public Accountability Sub-Committee to review the eight organisations which receive more than £25,000: these are the three local law centres, Wandsworth Council for Community Relations, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Wandsworth Women's Aid, the Pre-School Playgroups Association and the Field Centre near Bath. The Field Centre was acquired as a place where local deprived children could spend a couple of weeks taking part in activities such as canoeing, field study and trips into the surrounding country, which they could not do in the dense inner city area where they live. The Tories have suspended work on the Centre so that it can now provide only camping facilities during the summer and the plan to take on two permanent youth workers has been abandoned. Several other grant-aided organisations which fear they are next in the firing line will be unable to produce full proof of their *ratio vivendi*, since the Public Accountability Sub-Committee, despite its name, is not inviting the public to give evidence.

The council's Community Development Team was set up two and a half years ago to encourage public participation in council affairs through such organisations as community groups and tenants' associations, and by means of a monthly information bulletin. Now Dennis Mallam, leader of the council, claims there is no need for the team's work 'under the terms of reference

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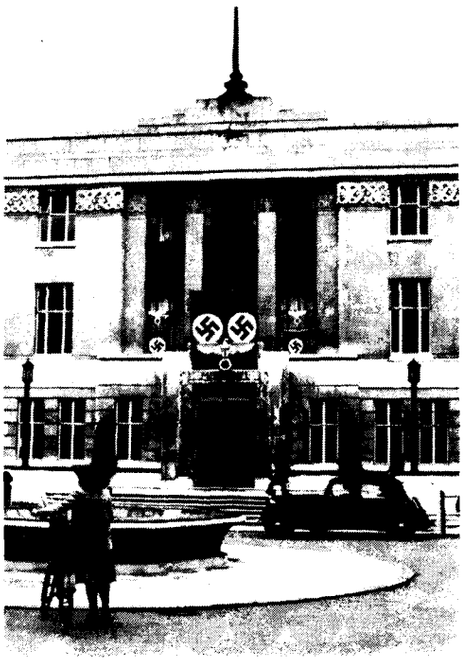
they had' but promises that the new council will continue community development work. This promise reinforces suspicions that (as with many of the Tory cuts) the team is being disbanded for purely political reasons: if the Tories plan to continue community development work why not use the six existing staff who are clearly best equipped to deal with the task? The answer probably lies in the following memo sent by Dennis Mallam on 7 June: 'I am very concerned at all the poster displays in the Community Development room. They include . . . a notice about defending the Contemptuous Ten, which seems to me a very left wing organisation as it includes picketing the High Court, there are Windscale demonstration posters, Anti-Nazi League posters and heaven knows what else.'

The sale of council houses – an important Tory plank at the next general election – has begun with gusto. All council tenants can now buy the houses in which they are living. In addition, empty houses which had been bought by the previous council for modernisation and letting will be up for sale, as will most houses that fall vacant through tenants moving out, and most newly-built houses. From new housing schemes alone the council can sell over 400 houses by next March. One of the chief priorities of the previous council was to rehouse families with children living in high-rise blocks, as well as those who needed to move into low-rise accommodation for medical reasons and to this end (with 5,200 waiting for transfers), it had begun increasing its housing stock. The Tories are instead selling new estates in Putney, comprising 84 houses: at a minimum of £16,000 for a one-bedroom home it's a fairly safe bet that the well-heeled residents of Putney will now have a better class of neighbour than they would have had if the houses had fulfilled the purpose for which they were originally built. And the council may have to remind the disappointed families in high-rise blocks that patience is a virtue.

These disciples of Thatcher have not been slow to express in practical terms their support for private enterprise. Addressing the Wandsworth branch of the Federation of Master Builders recently, Dennis Mallam said that local building contractors can expect contracts worth more than £17 million from the new council this financial year. At the same meeting he revealed his plans to run down the council's direct labour force from 900 workers to 200 by the end of the council's four year term – after three months he has made an impressive start by reducing the force to 790 'through natural wastage'. The Tories received sterling support from the vociferous Campaign Against Building Industry Nationalisation, which took a large advertisement in the Wandsworth Borough News during the May election, and are now doling out rewards. They are reducing the council's intake of apprentices; they have told the Building Works Department that it cannot tender for any further major construction works; they have announced that private contractors can expect at least £9 million of the £15 million allocated for new buildings in 1978/9, as well as £8 million worth of conversion and improvement work; and they have decided to end maintenance work in the western housing district and progressively reduce it in the other three districts, while making it clear that what maintenance work is done will go mainly to private firms.

As with almost every local authority, there are links between councillors and local building firms. Wandsworth's mayor, Sidney Morris, is a director of Frank and Co. (Builders) Ltd. Mrs Sonya Driver, a leading Tory councillor, is married to the proprietor of Philip Driver, Building and Plumbing Contractors.



Wandsworth residents were recently alarmed to find their Town Hall converted into Gestapo headquarters. Their reward for electing a Tory council? No, only a temporary disguise for a television series. *Photo, Martin Lipson*

There is, of course, no suggestion of anything improper or illegal in these business connections; indeed the Tories are rather proud of them, seeing them as a case of councillors practising in their private lives what they preach in the council chamber. One such local entrepreneur is Councillor Alfred Jessiman, a member of the social services committee, and a director of Eveline Day Nurseries Ltd. This personal interest was highlighted recently when he voted in the committee to cut the number of child-minders provided by the council, a move unlikely to be prejudicial to the day nursery trade. Jessiman claims that his interest is declared in the statutory register of members' interests, which is not open to the public; in the voluntary register, however, which is the only one open to public inspection, there is no mention of his directorship of Eveline Day Nurseries. 'Why put the company down there?' he asks, astonished. He has dismissed a call for his resignation as 'a political wheeze to cancel me out so I can't get a voice in the right places,' clearly unaware of the irony in the statement. For the Tories in Wandsworth private and public interest blend into a smooth and consistent whole.

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.....

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Philip Whitehead: Ten years on, Prague still waits for socialism

In Tom Stoppard's *Professional Foul*, Hollar, the philosophy graduate demoted to lavatory cleaner, explains his prohibited thesis to his visiting English professor; 'The ethics of the State must be judged against the fundamental ethic of the individual. The human being not the citizen. I conclude there is an obligation, a human responsibility, to fight against the State correctness. Unfortunately that is not a safe conclusion.' After ten years of 'normalisation' in Czechoslovakia, on the anniversary of the infamous act of proletarian internationalism, there are very few safe conclusions to be drawn in Husak's cowed and client state. The campaign for human rights goes on, against enormous odds, but the reformers of the Prague Spring do not know whether they will be vindicated in their lifetimes, either by the party which expelled them in the name of the Brezhnev Doctrine, or through the socialist opposition for which they provide the inspiration.

The tenth anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion will remind Husak that Alexander Dubcek, unperson though he is, is like the man upon the stair; he cannot be wished away. For communists, socialists and democrats alike, his 1968 experiment remains an inspiration and an ideal which will be remembered this weekend all over Europe. (In Britain Jiri Pelikan will speak at Conway Hall at 7 p.m. on Saturday, and the Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists will hold a rally at 2 p.m. on Sunday at Speakers' Corner.) A detailed study of what 'normalisation' has meant in practice, by V. V. Kusin*, and a first-hand account of the abduction of the Czech leadership in 1968, by Zdenek Mlynar**, have been published for the anniversary.

The sheer excitement of what the Prague Spring meant has not been blunted by the years. Self-management and workers' control, federalism, partnership with non-party organisations, the classical freedoms of speech and assembly, two-way media of communications instead of mere conduits of received dogma – it all came too quickly. But the leadership could do no other. It was carried along by popular support, in a country with deep democratic and pluralist traditions. It actually *had* the leading role so prated about by party theoreticians. No wonder Brezhnev feared its infectious power. There would be no sealed train to carry this bacillus elsewhere in the Soviet domain. It was to be eradicated. Kusin suggests that the invading armies expected pro-Moscow elements to surface and legitimise a new government. Dubcek, Smrkovsky and the others who had just passed the resolution condemning the invasion in the Praesidium could then have been liquidated. Mlynar, who drafted that resolution, has now confirmed in his own account published in Germany that they were kept at gunpoint, perhaps awaiting a 'revolutionary tribunal'. In fact it was the pro-Soviet hard-liners who were isolated by an outraged public. Even Vasil Bilak did not leap forward for the mantle of Vidkum Quisling.

Since 1969 Dubcek has sometimes been belittled for weakness and irresolution. The publication of his letter to Smrkovsky's widow in 1974 confirms a different view; he has remained consistent with his previous aims and that has required an equal courage. Mlynar tells that he was the last to sign the fateful protocol in Moscow, after an intense physical and mental ordeal. Brezhnev provided a brutal lesson in super-power politics. Whether LBJ had, as he claimed, promised him a free hand in his sphere of influence over the hot line cannot be proved. But the American response, in that week of the Democratic Convention, was certainly muted. The Czechs had the Munich lesson taught afresh – they could rely upon no-one but themselves.

Vladimir Kusin provides the most detailed account yet of the Husak years. He shows how Husak's stated intention to avoid any trials was destroyed by the balance of forces after the invasion; and the consequences of the purge in which half a million members of the party were expelled, often losing their homes and jobs. The unions of writers and journalists were disbanded and replaced by 'an assortment of administrators, pen-pushers, fanatics and weary men'. All departments of Marxism-Leninism were closed down. Science was subordinated to dogma. The inquisitor who arrived at the capital's nuclear research institute announced 'I would chuck out even Einstein if his political views were not in order'. The expellees' children were denied higher education as had happened to the 'class enemies' after 1948; and as in 1948 there was a new diaspora of those who thought the Czech state had nothing to offer.

What does it have to offer? Improving material living standards, a Skoda, a fridge, a weekend house in the Bohemian countryside for no more than the cost of compliance – the majority of Czechs will take that as solace for the psychic wounds of 1968. But some will not.

Husak is constantly under fire from a socialist and humanitarian standpoint. His ideologues' attacks on the reformers are ludicrous. Here is Karel Simon, deputy chief of Agitprop, in full flow in *Tribuna*; 'They have deviously expounded the ideas of bourgeois nationalism, and particularly anti-Sovietism, in opposition to the ideas of proletarian and socialist internationalism. They have fomented nationalist emotions and spread slanders and lies about our allies and friends . . . to tear our homeland out of the socialist community'. In contrast, the human rights movement in Czechoslovakia makes the point that it *is* socialist and that a true internationalism deplores *berufsverbot*. It links *berufsverbot* with employment and educational discrimination at home, denounces the repressive acts of the Chilean junta – and points up painful parallels in Czechoslavakia. Pavel Kohout, in an open letter to Husak in March asked why he had been beaten up by plainclothesmen. 'Explain to me in what way my position differs from that of a citizen in countries with a military dictatorship or even a racist regime . . . It differs basically because although I have been suffering from a headache since Saturday, and have hearing problems in my left ear, I have not been killed'.

It is true, not many have been killed. Some, like Professor Patocka, have died from broken health after police harassment. But there has not been the systematic torture and imprisonment of the 1950s. Husak's trials did not need to go so far. The presence of the Soviet army produced a stronger deterrent than any sentence. After 1972, when the regime met the first challenge of the re-grouped reform sympathisers with prompt trials and sentences, the hope of a structured opposition surviving within Czechoslovakia was anyway over. But the broader human rights initiative after the Helsinki conference has given the Czech reformers a new chance. Charter 77, signed by over 1,000 people in full knowledge of the persecution that would follow, has reasserted a central premise of Prague Spring – that the individual has rights which the state must respect, and that these are rooted in a common humanitarian heritage without which socialism is meaningless. Kusin describes the attitude of the Prague government to the campaign. 'Freedoms and rights under communism are not inalienable. They comprise a commodity which the party leadership has appropriated together with political power. It can then allocate them, as it does with the more tangible consumer goods, for temporary use by individuals and groups of people in exchange for other commodities, such as political obedience or even money'.

This is the area where battle is now joined with the regime. Some of the Chartists, like Mlynar, have been forced into exile. Havel is in jail, Patocka is dead. Mere possession of the Charter, which calls for the Czech government to uphold the principles to which it subscribed at Helsinki, is now taken as a criminal offence after the Machacek trial. Is the last of the original Charter spokesmen still at liberty, Jiri Majek, right to claim that the Charter is now irreversibly part of the body politic of his country? 'It all goes slowly, at a snail's pace, but still in the right direction.' Will the pace be quickened? Kusin acknowledges the impact of the Charter on opposition groups elsewhere in Eastern Europe but he is sceptical whether more will be achieved in Czechoslavakia, after Husak goes, than a very cautious return to reform, under the ever present restraint of the occupying armies. Optimists like Jiri Pelikan have pointed to the speed of change after the Polish workers brought down Gomulka, in spite of Russian troops in Poland. Might the Soviets offer the sacrifice of this or some future Czech leadership rather than resort to force again?

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*Vladimir V. Kusin, From Dubcek to Charter 77, *The Q. Press Edinburgh £8.50*

**Zdenek Mlynar, Nightfrost, *Europaeische Verlangsanstalt.*

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Robin Cook: Arms for China – imperialist axis with the West

The Ministry of Defence salesmen at this year's Aldershot arms bazaar must have been rather crestfallen when the Chinese delegates, on their first-ever visit, purchased nothing more than a book about their own Red Army. The publishers, Brasseys, were startled to receive not only a bulk order, but also enquiries about a translation into Chinese.

It was, nevertheless, quite an achievement to get the Chinese to Aldershot at all. Hitherto all communist countries have been out of bounds, under the terms of the COCOM agreement, by which NATO members and Japan undertook not to trade in weapons or strategic materials with certain states, including China. The recent Chinese tour of Europe's armaments industries is the first fruit of a long campaign to drop China from COCOM's list of prohibited customers.

Prominent in that campaign has been the Conservative Party, which has embraced Maoism with enthusiasm. The nearest we yet have to a theoretical gloss on this historic accommodation is a paper submitted to the Western European Union by Sir Frederic Bennett, Tory MP for Torbay, who has achieved the task, which cannot have come easily to a Conservative, of rewriting history from a Maoist perspective. Thus he now tells us – contrary to everything the Conservatives told us at the time – that China was reluctantly sucked into the Korean War, not, curiously, by a desire to fight western capitalism, but by a fear of the Soviet Union emerging as the sole saviour of North Korea and so gaining a dominant position in east Asia. According to Sir Frederic's new history, the cause of the Indian war of 1962 was simplicity itself: 'India building roads in territories claimed by China'.

Yet quite the most breathtaking of Sir Frederic's revisions is his treatment of the Chinese seizure of Tibet in 1950. This blood-stained conquest extinguished both the government and the traditional religion of a nation which had enjoyed independence for centuries; the rigour of the Chinese occupation has since provoked at least two major uprisings in which the Red Army ironically found itself the victim of a people's war waged on classic Maoist principles of guerrilla warfare. Sir Frederic dismisses it in a single phrase: 'China implemented its historic authority in Tibet in 1956'. The error over date is intriguing. Doubtless Sir Frederic confused the invasion with another event in 1956 when, as he might have expressed it, the Soviet Union implemented its historic authority over Hungary.

Sycophancy on such a scale requires a powerful motive. We might find the key to it if we remember how much at home the right-wing Tories were with the Cold War thesis that only constant confrontation would frustrate the Soviet Union's conspiracy to achieve global domination. After a decade into which *dentente* has introduced unwelcome complexity, they have discovered in the Chinese leadership kindred spirits who acutally believe in the original virtues of the Cold War with a passionate, intensive conviction.

Current Chinese foreign policy owes more to Dulles than to Marx. Its guiding principle is that a Soviet presence anywhere in the world demands an equal and opposite presence. As the Americans discovered under Dulles, those who act on such a principle will find themselves shoring up some very dubious regimes. The Chinese are now providing training for the Zaire navy – though admittedly it is a modest affair, confined to inland rivers. There is nothing in President Mobuto's regalomanic style of government which would commend it to Marx or Mao but, the current Chinese leadership attaches more weight to rumours of Cuban support for the recent invasion of Shaba than to any amount of repression within Zaire. It is also China which props

Sir Frederic Bennett MP, an unlikely late convert to Mao. A director of Bahamas, Hong Kong, and European banks, and a member of the Western European Union Assembly, he is evidently well qualified as a western capitalist apologist for China.

in power the psychopaths who terrorise Cambodia, having reduced it to a level of destitution and human misery without rival in a troubled world. China's sole motive in sustaining them is what Sir Frederic succinctly dismisses as her 'coolness to a reunified Vietnam, as an ally of the Soviet Union'.

The vigour with which China pursues its policy of global confrontation and the enthusiasm with which it is endorsed by our own Cold War veterans should at least give us cause for reflection before we accede to its tentative enquiries about weapon purchases. Its interest in acquiring Western arms appears to stem from a fundamental shift in military strategy: the traditional Maoist doctrine of drowning the enemy in a people's war conducted by a guerrilla militia has been abandoned in favour of a more conventional defence waged with advanced technology. Since 1975, in harmony with the new strategy, the regular army has been expanded at the expense of the people's militia. Such a military posture can only be achieved in the short term if China obtains access to the more sophisticated armaments of the two major military blocs: this inevitably impels her to approach the West.

A surprising amount of technology capable of military application has already been supplied by the West. Britain has sold fifty Rolls-Royce 'Spey' jet engines which power our Phantom fighters and has contracted to supply an entire production plant. Although no one has quite said so, these engines will almost certainly be used to modernise China's ageing fleet of Russian MIG fighters. The French have supplied thirteen Super Frelon helicopters equipped with surveillance radar for border patrol. Even the United States has sanctioned the export of the sensitive Daedalus infra-red equipment, which is capable of hunting submarines.

The uneasy borderline between such civilian technology and its military applications is neatly illustrated by the terms under which the US sold China two Cyber computers. The Chinese claimed to require one computer for offshore prospecting and the other for earthquake research: the momentum of this incipient arms trade has since carried us over the borderline so that the West is now supplying what are indisputably armaments. As yet however, China has shown an interest only in what the salesman would characterise as 'defensive' weapons systems: anti-tank missiles, anti-submarine electronics, short-range aircraft. Specifically they are believed to be contemplating a massive order for over 300 Harriers from Britain, most of which would be manufactured at a new plant in China.

Twelve nations share a lengthy frontier with China. Many of them, notably India, have previously suffered from China's distinctive ploy of 'cartographic aggression' in which bits of their territory suddenly appear on Chinese maps as annexed to China.

The nations will note with care whatever arms purchases their neighbour makes. However the greatest attention will undoubtedly be paid by the Soviet Union which shares with China the world's longest land frontier, all of which is disputed by China as 'a problem left over by imperialism'.

The Soviet Union (in an ironic parallel to the NATO posture in Central Europe) has traditionally relied on superior technology to compensate for the marked inferiority of its forces along the Chinese frontier, and cannot ignore the danger of this advantage being eroded by China buying western armaments. It is unlikely that the Kremlin would be so obliging as to respond by shifting resources from the European front to the Chinese border. A far more characteristic reaction would be a general heightening of military preparations – and that might well drive the final nail into *detente*. The Chinese, no doubt, would welcome such a development as an unbudgeted bonus from their arms purchases. Sir Frederic and Cold Warriors everywhere would be no less delighted.

NATIONAL FRONT— WHERE NOW?

At a time of more volatile voting patterns Peter Shipley's *The National Front: Racialism and neo-Fascism in Britain* offers an objective assessment of its rise to prominence: its exploitation of tensions, 'vision of national greatness', internal conflicts, Nazi faction, corporatism and political ambitions.

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Mike Phillips: Cuba's shifting image lends a new model to the Caribbean

To look at Cuba from the Caribbean is an eye-opening experience. From outside the region, Cuba is most often seen as a tool of Soviet policy and, as such, fatally discredited within its own sphere of influence. The reverse is very nearly true.

Cuba's continued and intractable existence has become the focus of a renewed ideological offensive; and one of the more successful targets has been its Caribbean neighbours. Even in the most conservative of Caribbean regimes, Castroism has become the standard in any argument about which direction the society should take. The shift can be measured by the fact that when Jamaica celebrated its independence in 1962 the then Prime Minister, Sir Alexander Bustamante, insisted on inviting only the USA and its allies. Nowadays, hostility to US interests and solidarity with Cuba is an essential part of the country's foreign policy. Trade and aid between Jamaica, Guyana and Cuba is now a regular and commonplace feature of the region's economic life. It would be a foolhardy government in either Jamaica or Guyana which denied that it was trying to emulate Cuba's achievements. These developments are echoed by a renewed pro-Fidel groundswell among Latin American nationalists.

It is not Castroite propaganda which has brought about the change, but the fact of Cuba's survival and the failure of North American policy in the Caribbean and Latin America. In August, 1961, at an OAS meeting at Punta del Este in Uruguay, the Alliance For Progress was officially born. This was President Kennedy's reply to the growing pressures for reform in Latin America that followed in the wake of the Cuban revolution. This was only a few months after the Bay of Pigs disaster and the Cuban delegate, Che Guevara, who saw it merely as another aspect of the same policy, voted firmly against. In the January of the following year the Foreign Ministers of the OAS countries approved a resolution excluding Cuba from the Latin American family.

At the time, the isolation of Cuba and the overthrow of its regime hardly seemed to be a difficult goal for the United States to achieve. True, the Bay of Pigs had been a miscalculation. But the war of attrition Washington was preparing against the Cubans seemed to promise success. There were good precedents. In 1954 John Foster Dulles had persuaded an OAS meeting to condemn the government of Guatemala. A few months later its leader Arbenz Guzman fell – his main crime having been to threaten the power and monopoly of the United Fruit Company. Cuba's crimes were much worse, since they threatened the entire panoply of capitalist interests in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The North American blockade was supplemented by attempts to reform the economies of the region, and by a massive programme of aid to combat 'communist subversion' both socially and militarily. The first produced huge loans to regimes such as that of Papa Doc Duvalier in Haiti. The second, more successfully, destroyed Che's guerilla strategy in Bolivia. Nothing was done, meanwhile, to rid the region of torture, poverty, the suppression of human rights, financial bankrupty or the overall dependence (in most of the smaller countries) on the whims and necessities of foreign capital. The indifference to these problems displayed by the outside world could be attributed to the well-established convention that Latin America's problems were largely due to political instability.

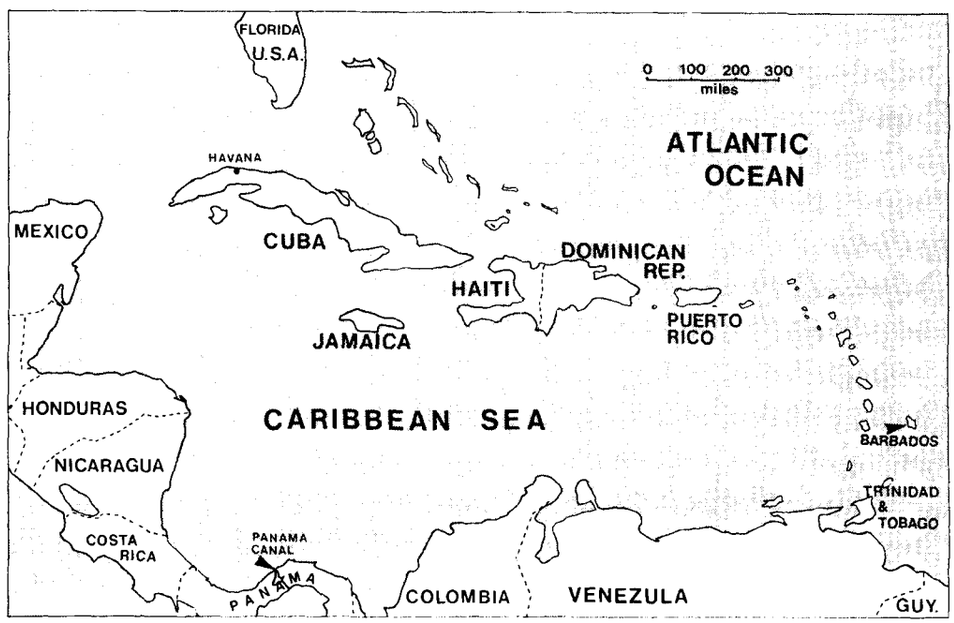
The phrase 'banana republic' encapsulated the outsider's view of the Caribbean (and to a certain extent still does). However, that view could not embrace Cuba, since Cuba's social revolution had indicated solutions which had previously been thought unworkable in the Latin American context.

The fashion for denouncing Cuba as a Soviet satellite, entirely dependent on massive Soviet aid and obliged to indulge in foreign adventures (like Angola at the bidding of its Soviet masters, follows the thesis that the Cuban revolution was betrayed. It was betrayed, according to the thesis, by the accession of the Community Party to power and influence, and by Fidel's conversion to the tenets of the class struggle. The argument has a history rooted in the conflict between the Castroite and non-communist Left on the one hand, and the Cuban Communist party and the Latin American 'mafia' of pro-Soviet communists on the other. One of the chief issues in dispute is Moscow's traditional approach of waiting on the 'correct' development of class interests within particular countries, rather than encouraging popular dissatisfaction to sweep governments out of power. Some elements blamed this policy (and its support by the pro-Soviet Bolivian communists) for Che's lonely death. It was resented equally by the radical reformers, the non-communist maxists and the burgeois nationalists. The betrayal thesis became part of the conventional wisdom all over Latin America in the light of Cuba's rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

More recently, however, ideas have begun to shift. The failure of the *foco* in Bolivia; the decisive defeat of the urban guerrillas in Argentina; the demonstrable improbability of the Chilean road to socialism; and the hegemony (real and potential) of the military in so many Latin American countries – all have altered calculations. On the last day of the eleventh World Youth Festival in Havana, the Mexicans linked hands and, joined by other Latin Americans, began to chant *America Latina*. The cry was taken up by the massive Cuban crowd in Revolution Square and quite drowned the East Europeans at the other end singing the *Internationale*. Fidel's charismatic cult in Latin America has always been secure and the Cuban ideological thrust has begun to bite again.

Even the North Americans have started to breach their own *cordon sanitaire*. A huge building of concrete and glass on the sea front in Havana houses the United States' 'presence' – although it is not, of course, an embassy. The Canadian ambassador, who officially represents US interests, says cautiously: 'They are in contact'. American and Canadian tourists have again become familiar sights in the country and Cuban cultural teams are out touring the region with what seems like very little inhibition.

Ironically, now that fears of a 'Cuban takeover' have been allayed – partly because people are less suspicious of Soviet inten-



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LANCE WATSON

Pioneer Youth at the World Festival of Youth in Havana: an image of Cuba which impresses her Caribbean neighbours.

tions in the region and partly because of a shift in the Cuban leadership's ideological focus – different aspects of the country's influence have come into play. Cuba's experience has had a traumatic and far-reaching effect on the Caribbean's own perception of its role.

In this century, the Caribbean's economic systems have been distinguished by long-term stagnation, structural rigidity and high rates of unemployment. After independence, the model that the Caribbean had to choose, as a way out of a network of colonial dependence, followed the general outlines of programmes like Puerto Rico's 'Operation Boot-strap'. The model was one of developing industrial enterprise, based mainly on capital invested from outside. It effectively precluded the pursuit of public policies aimed towards social equality. Internally, it conferred new strength on traditional power structures by allowing existing business units to expand. At the same time, it encouraged expatriate ownership of resources and reduced local groupings to the state of subordinate partners in international capitalist and financial operations. Important resources (Trinidad oil, Jamaican and Guyanese bauxite) belonged to outside corporations, whose profits were augmented by locating secondary processes, such as smelting and fabrication, at a distance from the point of extraction. Production and employment were made by overseas head offices unconcerned with local development.

Puerto Rico had special advantages, for example a tariff-free access of goods to the North American market. But after industrialisation it was still left with heavy external ownership of productive instruments, large scale unemployment, a high-cost import structure, and an agricultural system sacrificed to the needs of industry. The local population was at once demoralised and resentful (Oscar Lewis' *Children of Sanchez* is only one of many studies to demonstrate these tendencies, and any visitor can find his own Latin American horror stories). Puerto Rico also suffered from an inferiority complex – the result of always having its decisions made from outside.

These features are repeated in one degree or another throughout the Caribbean. In the political sphere, serious programmes of radical change could not be undertaken for fear of disturbing the confidence of foreign investors. Public policy was infinitely vulnerable to the dictates of the foreign 'expert'. Thus political sovereignty had little value, and an export economy developed which inhibited any serious planning for domestic purposes. Within the region's classic satellite/metropolis relationship, the satellites lost certain basic rights: the right to dispose freely of natural resources; the right to remove foreign bases; and the right to plan foreign and domestic policies according to the needs of the indigenous population.

The classic defence of this policy was that Caribbean countries could utilise to their own advantage the expansionist urges of metropolitan capital. It suited, too, the traditional tendencies of a bourgeoisie educated abroad, to increase their cultural dependency on external societies, and to ensure their status by spending on imported goods. But behind such defences lay a more pragmatic argument: that there was no other way of financing the industrialisation of economies like those in the region. The phrase, 'the take-off point' became the subject of much altercation among Caribbean economists. For a while, the symbols of nationhood, flags, national anthems and diplomatic missions, ratified the nationalist aspirations of the post-colonial elites. None of this, however, could satisfy working-class aspirations.

In Jamaica, for example, the nationalism of the middle classes was cancelled out by the surge of discontent fuelled by the breakdown of the rural economies and the resulting shift of population to the city. As in Puerto Rico, the dependent model had solved none of the real economic problems. It is at this point that Cuba's ideological significance begins to appear. Its importance has been to demonstrate the practicability of a socialist road based on central planning, general austerity, social incentives as opposed to private self interest, and a resolute opposition to foreign capital controlling any part of the economy.

In the Caribbean perspective, few of the criticisms made from outside matter very much. For most of the Caribbean population, poverty is a continual experience. For many, Cuban austerity would be a relief. It is precisely on these grounds that a number of Caribbean governments have begun to undertake programmes of import substitution. 'Communist regimentation' hardly seems terrible in a society where poverty imposes its own limits. For instance, visitors to Cuba have commented on the 'regimentation' of the Pioneer Youth. What the Caribbean visitor notices is that they're not begging or stealing from tourists. In the same way, it is difficult for those who live in the Caribbean – who have never known anything but domination (and contempt) from foreign interests a lot closer to home – to be very alarmed about the vague threat of Soviet domination. To them, fighting in Africa, for the aims for which the Cubans say they're fighting, seems mere logic, and admirable rather than threatening. Most important of all, the Cubans have put the Caribbean on the map, in a way that Caribbeans, plagued by collective feelings of inferiority, have always longed for.

So, Cuba has prepared a characteristically Caribbean drama. Just as nineteenth century Haiti offered Caribbean societies a choice between revolt and acceptance, Cuba now offers the Caribbean the choice between attempting to transform its own economies and continuing to accept the model of dependency. So far only Jamaica and Guyana have shown tangible effects of Cuba's influence and they can hardly be said to have gone very far on the road to transforming their societies along the lines of the Cuban model. But there is a sense in which the Caribbean, inspired by the Cuban example, has begun to discover a new and more purposeful identity. The focus of this identity is, for the first time in the Caribbean's history, the Carib[illegible]

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Ian Black: The doveish hawk that hovers over Begin

Ezer Weizman

Shortly after returning from his meeting with Sadat in Austria last month, Israeli Defence Minister Ezer Weizman ripped a peace poster off the wall of Prime Minister Begin's office in Jerusalem. There was no room for it, he said 'Because the cabinet doesn't really want peace'. Friends and supporters said he'd removed the poster (which was the official emblem for Israel's 30th anniversary) because it was 'aesthetically' inappropriate. But his colleagues in the Herut (freedom) party, the major component of Begin's Likud Coalition, were already fed up with his antics over recent months and lambasted him mercilessly. Weizman was unperturbed: 'Kiss my arse', is the precise expression he used.

His tempestuous outbursts have put him in the headlines both in Israel and abroad ever since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem last November. It was with him, not with Begin, or with Dayan, that the Egyptian President found 'a common language'. Weizman also created close and cordial ties with his Egyptian counterpart, War Minister Abdul-Ghani Gammasi.

Weizman is every Egyptian's favourite Israeli. 'I like that Ezer,' Sadat said when Weizman broke an uncomfortable silence during the Jerusalem visit by saying jocularly: 'Well, it looks as if I'm going to be out of a job'. When he led the Israeli military delegation to Egypt he delighted his hosts with his natural bonhomie and the evident gusto he displayed, as if sightseeing in Cairo bazaars and drinking coffee in Groppi's was the most natural thing in the world for an Israeli Defence Minister to do. The Americans like him too: On one of his regular arms purchasing missions in March, he threatened Begin that he would resign if the Government sanctioned further Jewish settlement on the occupied West Bank while negotiations were still going on – and delivered his threat by telephone from a crowded New York hotel room filled with journalists. Later that month he called for the creation of a 'National Peace Government' – only to be met with the outrageous response that the Likud *was* the peace government.

For all that it is hard to place Weizman on the accepted ornithological scale: is he more hawk than dove and if so how much more? He is a member of Herut, traditionally Israel's Nationalist Party par *excellence*, founded by Begin and his Irgun cronies in 1948, with its territorial maximalism, militant anti-socialism and recent obeisance, largely at Begin's bidding, to the less pacific symbols of Jewish religious orthodoxy. But it would be wrong to dismiss Weizman simply as an expansionist Zionist.

He is, to be sure, no 'weak-kneed defeatist' or 'wrongheaded leftist', to use the epithets hurled by his former political bedfellows at those who advocate a more positive approach to peace. In May, he put forward a grandiose plan for building six urban centres on the West Bank, aimed at increasing its Jewish population to 10,000 by 1981. He is also clearly embarrassed at being singled out by the Egyptians as the only Israeli leader they can talk to. He usually made sure a neutral witness was present at key discussions with Sadat. He did more than his fair share of sabre-rattling before the no-peace-no-war log jam was broken up last November. The day after he became Defence Minister, he told a group of West Bank notables that he'd be happy to meet PLO leader Yasser Arafat: 'I will tell Arafat what I think of him. He will tell me what he thinks of me. If he shoots me, I'll shoot him back.' Later that week the Danish paper *Politiken* reported that Weizman was cordially inviting the Arabs to start a war. 'A war,' he was quoted as saying 'would help sort out some of the problems of the Middle East'.

Weizman grew up in the relatively comfortable world of the Zionist *haute bourgeoisie*. He came of the finest pedigree – his uncle was Chaim Weizmann. And as his merchant father had strong right-wing leanings, Ezer's youth was worlds away from the labour Zionist milieu that nurtured his contemporaries. He came late to politics and the landmarks in his life have been military. He spent the second world war as an RAF pilot in Egypt, India and Rhodesia: his excellent English still bears traces of the further flung outposts of empire. He and a handful of others built up the Israeli air force from scratch. In 1958, at the age of 34, Weizman became its commander.

He is credited with Israel's destruction of the Egyptian air force in the early hours of June 5, 1967. His autobiography, which reveals a thinking and not unimaginative man, but not an intellectual in the conventional sense, has the title *Yours the Heavens, Yours the Earth* – which sums up the unbridled arrogance that permeated Israeli life, especially its higher military echelons, after the Six Days War.

Weizman retired from the air force in 1969 and had a brief and inglorious spell as Minister of Transport in the shortlived national unity government. This first tour of duty was marked only by charges (of which he was later cleared) of dangerous driving and manslaughter, as well as an unfortunate incident, when, apparently drunk, he suggested that Israel's minority problem could be solved by sending Moslems to Jordan and Druzes (the most favoured and loyal of the country's non-Jews) to Syria. Weizman came back to politics in 1972, only to burn his fingers badly in an unprecedented attempt to challenge Begin's generation-long dominion over Herut. He retired glowering to his business interests – the military research and development market which is a favourite with Israeli generals down on their luck.

He came back again to head the Likud's campaign in last year's elections. That return did little to increase Begin's regard for Weizman. Neither did the fact that Weizman won the election by compelling Begin to take a back seat and stop projecting the traditional 'True Believer' image. The candidate for the premiership was shown romping in the park with his grandchildren while Weizman and the snappy public relations firm he hired played down the usual war and peace issues and hammered away mercilessly – with barely concealed contempt for the electorate they were wooing – at inflation and corruption, the Labour alignment's weakest points.

As Defence Minister he has presided over an ugly and fruitless little war in South Lebanon, over the routine issues of terror and retaliation, and the subterfuges and repercussions of the continued settlement of the occupied territories – all against the background of the Egyptian peace initiative. He has clearly been deeply and genuinely moved by the prospect of peace. His close friends say that the fact that his son sustained permanent brain damage during the bloody war of attrition along the Suez Canal in 1969 plays a large part in his responses.

Whatever his motives – and there is no doubt that he aspires to the premiership – Weizman is the only Likud minister who has shown that he is prepared to take risks for peace. While Begin, high on stimulants and his own rhetoric, illustrates the meaning of territorial compromise by theatrically ripping up scraps of paper on the Knesset podium, Weizman can be seen grimacing or with head buried in hands. At cabinet sessions he is either sullen and subdued or furious and cursing. When the government decided in June to evade a clear answer to the American questions on the future status of the West Bank and Gaza, Weizman demonstratively voted against the decision and stormed out of the meeting, announcing that he was going to prepare the army for war.

If he is pushed aside by his colleagues and the Likud continues the remorseless drift back to the uncertainty that preceded the Sadat visit, there will be no better political epitaph for him than his curt and characteristic retort to a fellow minister who berated him for betraying the platform on which he was elected: 'Shut up,' Weizman said, 'go dig a foxhole'.

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London Diary

☐ What is an Official Secret? News of how many cups of tea are consumed in the Ministry of Defence, what happens in prison or how many loo rolls are bought by the Foreign Office. Our obscure laws on this subject, most of which would be held unconstitutional in America, are, says the Government White Paper, to be reformed and journalists who receive unsolicited secrets will no longer be guilty of a crime. However, no suggestion is made of reforming the Common Law of conspiracy, so a reporter who asks a question which elicits a secret or arranges an interview where secrets are discussed, may still be hustled into the nick. Journalists may, therefore, be little comforted to know that if a demented civil servant rushes up to them in Oxford Street and pours out the secrets of trouser making for the Army, they will, provided they remain totally silent, not be committing a criminal act.

☐ The unfashionable concept of free speech is now in greater danger from the Official Secrets Act and the Libel Laws than from the derided Obscene Publications Act. Most depressing of all the BBC (Bereft of Bloody Courage) seems to have abandoned any attempt to defend its own decisions, and has emerged as the institution most reluctant to allow a writer to give any sort of realistic representation of the world we live in. It was more than twenty years ago that the late and great Mr Justice Stable in the 'Philanderer' case said that future generations would depend on contemporary writers to discover what life was like in the second half of the twentieth century. If the BBC is allowed to go on suppressing the plays it makes, the distant historian will come to the conclusion that Borstal Institutions ceased to be breeding grounds for crime in the late 1970's and that cheeky Cockney sparrows used no language worse than an occasional 'gor blimey'. After abandoning 'Gotcha' at a word from Mrs Whitehouse it seems that the BBC has other, even more flagrant examples of unappealable censorship planned for the autumn season. I no longer expect the BBC to have much respect for the integrity of the artist, but what the Corporation should realise is that the suppression of a play can, in certain circumstances, be as great an evil as the suppression of news; the fear of giving offence is being used to excuse lying to the public.

☐ It has not been a good week for our most cherished institutions and a fit of dementia, I hope of brief duration, must have seized the Arts Council when it decided to spend £40,000 backing a commercial tour of 'My Fair Lady' instead of touring a new play by Arnold Wesker. It seems the theory is that the provinces should have a chance of seeing the basic theatre repertoire and many deprived young people have never seen 'My Fair Lady'. Nor, I suppose, have they seen 'No, No, Nanette', or 'Naughty Marietta'. Of course everyone should have a chance of seeing the Shakespeare, Chekhov and Strindberg standards and new works by John Osborne, Harold Pinter and Mr Wesker whenever, happily, they appear. To those wishing to see 'My Fair Lady' at the public expense the Arts Council must suggest the Penguin 'Pygmalion', the long playing Julie Andrews, and perhaps a glass of milk by courtesy of the local authority.

☐ Milk, however, will only be available if it has not joined cocaine in 'Schedule A' of the Dangerous Drugs Act. There is no human activity, eating, drinking, sleeping or sex which some doctor somewhere won't discover leads directly to cardiac arrest, cancer, fallen arches or the bots. (Life itself, of course, as doctors tell us, leads inevitably to heart failure if persisted in for a mere three score years and ten). So it came as no surprise to me when Dr Paul Buisseret, lecturer at Guy's Hospital, grabbed a headline to announce that milk is very bad for children. At first I thought he was criticising mothers, who have clearly arranged for their breasts to be filled with the wrong stuff and should offer stimulating Lucozade or at least orange juice when suckling their young. But it appears that it's only cows' milk which produces bad temper, eczema and a reluctance to go to school. I can tell the learned doctor, from a life time's experience, that 'writing' is also extremely dangerous to health, producing as it does, cramp, piles, failing eyesight, indigestion, bad temper in the home when stumped for words and an extreme reluctance to meet deadlines. The Ministry of Education should forbid children to have anything to do with it, and substitute the building of model paediatric units out of old plastic cartons of sterilised Ribena.

☐ 'We are appointing a successor to Jesus Christ, it's not a matter for Ladbroke's.' So said a disapproving Catholic MP, but it seems that Ladbroke's are offering 5 to 2 on Cardinal Pignedoli and you can get 25s on Cardinal Hume. Meanwhile who is not touched by that profound fantasy, so resonantly expressed by Fr Rolfe in 'Hadrian VII'? Is there a knock at the front door, have a large Bishop and his egg-stained priest arrived with an urgent invitation to Rome, to the lowered canopies of the Sistine Chapel, the plume of white smoke and the choice of three sizes of snowy vestments behind the High Altar? Who would not revel in the supreme spiritual authority, the peace from sexual anxiety and the lonely meals served by elderly nuns? Imagine the banner headlines 'First devout atheist crowned at St. Peter's.' Of course it's all a dream, the front door opens to admit *The Times*, and I read, in the fascinating obituary of Pope Paul VI the final word on women priests; it seems that when the young Montini was ordained he was wearing fragments of his mother's wedding dress.

☐ One comfort about being an artist in England is that, although there is no country more devoted to kicking the hell out of any young or middle-aged creative spark, you will be all right when you're eighty. Often there is something valiantly inspiring about the art of old men; Yeats and Hardy discovered their best poetry, Verdi wrote his best opera, Picasso continued to make hilarious fun of Art and Life and Tolstoy staggered off to leave his wife at an age which would be classed 'geriatric' by the Ministry of Health. But with the universal Sunday Supplement acclaim of Henry Moore we are still with those depersonalised figures, unfeeling as Egyptian mummies, which seemed to me to be so unilluminating about those who sheltered from the Blitz. Those large lumps of stone, some vaguely reminiscent of ladies with pin heads and large thighs, some merely representative of large lumps of stone, which squatted silently around Battersea Park, are now, it seems, beyond criticism. Good news, therefore, for all suffering playwrights and National Theatre directors whose work has been under fashionable critical attack. You only have to hang on until you're eighty, lads, and all will be forgiven.

☐ It's wonderful not to be a tourist in August, marvellous not to have to sleep pillowed on a Lufthansa bag at Heathrow, blissful not to be entertained by comics and talking parrots at Luton airport, and deeply enjoyable to watch the soft rain falling interminably in the Chilterns. Enough has been said about the havoc caused by tourists; having swamped Rhodes and obliterated Tunisia they have now made London uninhabitable and ensured that no play can appear in the West End that cannot readily be understood by the eager visitor from Tokyo. There is another danger of the shrinking world. A friend who is a great film star and a man of infinite charm agreed to do a commercial advertising an underarm deodorant on the strict condition that it was only to be shown in Japan. Imagine his humiliation when, on leaving the Connaught Hotel, a huge bus load of Japanese tourists flooded onto the pavement pointing derisory fingers at him, laughing fit to burst and patting their arm pits in delighted recognition.

John Mortimer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ In such a sexually permissive society as our own could anyone please explain to me why it should be virtually impossible to purchase a double bed which is fitted with a footboard? – Letter in the *Observer* (Pamela Swingler)

☐ Mr John Dall, chairman of the Eastern Counties Liberals, said that he did not think the Thorpe affair would make any difference to the Liberal vote. 'People who are worried about this sort of thing do not vote Liberal anyway', he said. – *The Times* (Josephine Dollmayer)

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Yours Faithfully

Despite the rural joys of our pretty little Devon village of Appleton and its charming surroundings, coupled with the fact that 'Myrtlebank' and its spacious grounds are just now at their summery best (dahlias and fuchsias all out, every rose black-spot-free for once, my passion flower ablaze with blossom, the hibiscuses heavy with the buds that will patriotically provide red, white and blue blooms, and, notwithstanding daily dawn visits from the wily heron in whose fruitful bailiwick we lie, a few trout swimming about ungobbled-up in the stream), there is unfortunately occasionally, even here, a cloud on our horizon provided from outside and by forces well beyond our control. By 'cloud' I mean, of course, the Post Office.

This dread monopoly, currently under attack, and serve it right, from a number of reputable and cross quarters, has provided what I thought at the time must really be its nadir of lunacy. A village resident here, whose small house happens to have two doors opening onto the road, has been allotted two different postal codes, one for each door one can only suppose. Picture the excitement of darting from door to door for that newsy p.c. from Padstow! Which code will Aunt May have used? The *suspense* of it all! Now, 'Myrtlebank' has three doors, all of which could at a pinch qualify as front doors, leading as they do into the open air, yet it has just the one postal code. Why have I been singled out for this unfair discrimination, may I ask? Why have I not been allotted my full quota of codes? The fact that I don't, in order not to waste ink and typewriter-ribbon, use my postal code at all, and indeed haven't the faintest idea what it is, is neither here nor there. Our Exeter sorting-machine is said, on very good authority, to be sulking, unused and unlikely to be, in a builder's yard, so why bother?

But I was wrong about that nadir. There were deeper depths to come. A full page advertisement for the telegraphic facilities of the P.O. has appeared in a popular daily newspaper, costing heaven only knows what (our money, don't forget) and urging us all to send more telegrams, 'a uniquely personal way of saying all kinds of things', and indeed it is various kinds of extremely personal things that it recklessly tempts one to say. 'No wonder,' they brag on, 'that eight million were sent last year.' How dotty can you get? Does the P.O. think we haven't all got our O level in Maths or something? This very boastful statistic merely means that only one person in seven could afford to send just the one telegram in one whole year. And do they really seriously imagine that reading about telegrams is going to cause a lemming-like stampede to the [illegible] to send off a batch?

But was that then the nadir, or lowest point? Have we yet, you rightly ask, reached the P.O.'s Mindanao Trench, to be found in the Pacific Ocean and at a depth of 5,740 fathoms? Not on your life. Here it is. Those responsible have, with a quite desperate sort of jollity which is rather moving in a kind of way, dotted this expensive advertisement of which I wrote with deplorably jokey telegrams of their own invention, clearly aimed at making us giggle our way to the nearest office. Get ready, and steel yourself. Here is a sample one. 'Parts received. Frankenstein.' It's acknowledging a make-your-own monster kit, you see. Get it? Here's a longer one. 'Missed train and catching tomorrow's camel. Lawrence.' I, who try to earn a modest living by making bad jokes too, can at least recognise one when I see it, and all this is a wince-a-second stuff. On and on we go. 'Happy happy mothers mothers day day. The Twins.' 'Lira strong. Mark.' And, in order to give some persons a sexy twitch, 'Thanks. Casanova'. Some of them demand a certain background of literary knowledge. 'Consignment of rat poison arriving Hamelin Nov. 6th Piper, London.' There are, alas, plenty more where those came from but it is only fair to limit the amount of nausea that one passes on to readers. Nothing, not even the 9p stamp and its failure fully to honour its commitment, has ever depressed me more than this sadly shocking rubbish.

A quick turn in the garden to sweeten my imagination and to allow over-heated blood to cool (this year's petunias have turned out to be very showy, dark mauve ribbed trumpets rather reminiscent in shape of those pleasing old crank-up gramophone horns, and the arum lilies held up until well into August) and then back, not to wonder yet again why the P.O. chose to parade its miserable telegram showing when it ought instead to have been hushing it up but to pen a more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger letter to the local Income Tax authorities. Having nobly, ever one to lend a helping hand, paid my tax right on the dot when they clamoured for it in June, I was a little bit huffy to receive last week a Second Demand for a sum which, though roughly the same as the one I paid, was, to complicate things further, different. The initial demand was printed in black. Second Demands seem to come in a tasteful shade of light blue. The Final Demands, or so I am given to understand by people less prompt and public-spirited than I, are printed in a bold red (for danger) and contain wording which can only be described as threats.

Adopting a friendly, conversational tone, and ending with 'What weather!', I have politely asked the Collector to explain himself and to tell me what he and his department have done to deserve their being paid twice. On a similar occasion a year or so ago, an exactly similar letter was sent, but answer came there none. Too ashamed and embarrassed to reply, I suppose. No answer yet, incidentally, from Downing Street. You will recall that, worried about the country's finances, I queried an all-male dinner party for 54 persons, not all of who seemed to be political, thrown by the Prime Minister. I had fallen to wondering what was the reason for, and cost of, the beano. Nothing like taking a chummy interest in the affairs of others. No reply, as I said, so far. Totting it all up for me, I expect. I shall be hearing any minute now.

The dissatisfactions of the angry young men with the world of their day are as nothing compared, as you see, to those of us angry old men when we get at it. Apathy and inefficiency in all around we see. However, being now in danger of apoplexy and a really sensational thrombosis, I lay down my pen and stroll out yet again, this time to the orchard to inspect the apples and estimate our crop prospects (I am especially pleased with the Duke of Devonshire who this year has really given of his best and has responded finely to last autumn's mulchings). But even outdoors has a shock or two. We are hospitably inclined in Appleton and it's lunch here and tea there and telephonings and 'What about Thursday, then?'. Thus it is that we get to know each other's houses and gardens pretty well. We peer and poke about and ask for cuttings and in doing so at a very august dwelling, I made a startling discovery which I bring to your notice in the hushed tones that one reserves for announcements of serious illnesses. The Bultitudes have [illegible] gnomes.

Roger Woddis

Thoroughly Modern Charlie

Prince Charles is to study at first hand the working of British finance and industry.

Hail to the hero, our man in the City,
Splendidly feudal but geared to today;
Give a big hand to our royal Walter Mitty,
Dreaming of some other part he can play.

Only the bitter will barrack their betters,
Only the twisted will call it a con;
As in all truly professional theatres,
Costumes may fade, but the show must
go on.

Uniformed clowns only earn our derision,
Now for the pinstripe and dark bowler-hat;
Merchants rate more than an armoured
division,
Commodity markets are where it is at.

Sitting on boards is a sound occupation,
Studying prices when quoted at par,
Whether or no it is good for the nation,
Must be tremendously good for PR.

You who find Britain today so alarming,
Watch for our coming attraction, 'Ich Dien',
Starring a new and exciting Prince Charming,
Spanner in hand, at an oily machine.

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Letters to the Editor

Attacking prison secrecy

Sir, Laurie Taylor (NS 11 August) is a good polemicist: it is odd that he keeps going out of his way to knock the Howard League, which is on the same side in the struggle for penal reform, and that he never quotes any of the League's statements (the majority, I should think) which agree with his own position, such as our conference's support for a resolution urging work for ultimate abolition of prisons.

To take just one of his side-swipes: the reason we 'gave pride of place to the Home Office' was that we think it is a good idea to give a platform to the Home Secretary from time to time to encourage him to make statements about penal policy which reformers can dissect (as Laurie Taylor duly does). In any case the Howard League believes that reforms are more likely to be obtained if one of the reformist organisations adopts a policy of dialogue rather than confrontation with the Home Office which, for all its faults, is more enlightened than the general run of public opinion. A bit of raillery doesn't matter; what is serious is that the Howard League, as an inflation-hit voluntary organisation receiving no government funds, needs all the support it can get. If Laurie Taylor, from the security of a professorial salary, discourages people from joining, we shall be less able to work for the fairer treatment of prisoners.

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The future of socialism

Sir, What is a socialist and whose cause does he stand for? A reading of Barbara Wootton's article (NS 4 August) may lead one to realise how little connection there is between the ideas of the left-wing intelligentsia and the aspirations of the working people. To Baroness Wootton the aim of socialism is to give people what they want; it is a war fought on behalf of the consumers against the captains of industry, and the victory will be won when the selfish schemes of the latter have been absorbed into 'a comprehensively planned economy under public ownership.' Yet working people are by definition primarily producers, not consumers, and a good many of them work in the industries whose power is being attacked by socialists; furthermore, if industry is becoming increasingly ruthless, is disregarding the environmental consequences of its activities and is failing to satisfy consumer demand, this is due not to a malignant cynicism on the part of management but to the growing pressure from the workforce for more pay and better conditions. The true enemy of the socialist is therefore the working man, and the true aim of socialism is the containment of his aspirations. This may seem a surprising conclusion, but no other is possible.

I also doubt Baroness Wootton's contention that democratic socialism offers a viable path for the future. The pressures of producer demand have intensified in our time to such an extent that not even government interference can support the crumbling structure of industry and the financial world. The age of Keynesian manipulation and socialist compromise is over, and a clear choice must now be made: we must decide, as a society, between the rival claims of the consumers to demand the goods and services they require and of the producers to spend their lives in the way they choose. A judgment in favour of the consumers would take us back to the world of Adam Smith (at least), while a recognition of the right of producers to share in the freedom and dignity that are supposed to be the privilege of all members of a democratic society would lead to the breaking of new ground and to the creation of a community that may be regarded by future historians as the true fulfilment of the trinitarian ideal of the French Revolution, and so worthy of the name of socialism.

SIMON BLAXLAND
'Landfall'
Haresfield Lane
Brookthorpe, Gloucester

Sir, In her attack on capitalism, Barbara Wootton naïvely observes that it encourages cheating. Of course it does, but she seems not to know that socialism does too, and on a far wider scale. Under capitalism various producers cheat the public often though not with impunity; socialist governments do so habitually and with impunity – look at ours. Moreover, under socialism, the public constantly cheat the government: in Czechoslovakia there is a saying, 'He who does not steal from the State steals from his own children.' A full-blown socialist system, with its guaranteed inefficiency, actually *needs* mass theft and a flourishing black market in order to 'work' at all.

KINGSLEY AMIS
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Value added

Sir, Christopher Hird (NS 4 August) advises employees to beware of value added and says that the beauty of a value added statement, in the eyes of the company publishing it, is that it scarcely mentions profit at all. But it does. Profits, after tax, are either paid as dividends to shareholders or are retained. Both dividends and retentions appear in every VA Statement I have seen, including that of ICI which was reproduced in Mr Hird's article. Is it not helpful for employees to see a report on the wealth which has been created by their efforts in combination with the company's capital (i.e. the value added) and then to see the proportions which have been absorbed by wages, taxes, dividends and so on? The value added statement seems ideal for disclosing this while the conventional profit and loss account is a narrower report on shareholders' welfare.

Mr Hird also describes as a 'deceit' the practice of deducting depreciation as a cost when arriving at the figure for value addead. The issue here is whether companies should report net value added, deducting depreciation as a cost along with bought-in materials, or whether they should report gross value added, before deducting depreciation. Consistency demands the former. Consider for example, a hotel which buys a sack of sugar and a new chair (expected life – four years). The sugar will be charged as bought-in materials in accordance with its usage. If, on the accounting date, the sack is still half full then only half the cost will be charged as bought-in cost for the expired period, the other half being carried forward to be charged against the next year's revenues. By analogy if, on the balance sheet date, the hotel chair is one year old and is therefore 25 per cent worn out, should not the 25 per cent depreciation be charged together with the consumed half-sack of sugar as bought-in cost? Both were bought from outside, both are being used up over time, both should be charged on the accruals principle to reflect the correct period cost. Half the sack of sugar is carried forward to be charged as next year's bought-in cost and 75 per cent of the cost of the chair is carried forward to be charged as bought-in cost over the succeeding three years. New value added is here seen to be consistent.

MICHAEL F. MORLEY
University of Aberdeen
Dunbar Street
Aberdeen

Defending Czech Socialists

Sir, In their attempts to drum up support for their 'Remember Czechoslovakia 1968' rally this Sunday the Young Conservatives invited all groups affiliated to the British Youth Council to participate. To test the strength of this offer we volunteered to nominate two platform speakers, who would have given a slightly different slant on events to that which will be provided by Rhodes Boyson MP or Peter Walker MP. To our less than total surprise this offer has now been rejected. The Conservative definition of participation sounds like the Russian definition of popular support for the invasion.

As socialists we do remember Czechoslovakia, not only the Czechoslovakia invaded by the Russians in 1968 but also the Czechoslovakia invaded by the Germans in 1938, when the Conservative Party's avowed concern for the welfare of the Czech people was shown to be only paper thin. The saddest thing is that the issue of human rights and freedom of speech in Czechoslovakia is being used for purely party political motives. In 40 years, in Conservative Central Office as in Prague, nothing has really changed.

NICK BUTLER
Young Fabian Group
11 Dartmouth Street
London SW1

Exploiting F. R. Leavis

Sir, May I correct two points made by Q. D. Leavis (Letters 4 August)? We did write to Mrs Leavis asking if someone could come to see her in connection with a documentary film we hoped to make about her late husband, but there was, of course, no question of our 'demanding' her co-operation. Also, when I wrote to Mrs Leavis I did not say that we would persist regardless of her opposition. I did not agree with her view that 'anyone who is likely to be interested in Dr Leavis's work and is likely to profit by it already knows of it', and explained that we might go ahead with the film in the end, but this would not be because we took her views lightly, nor would we be acting out of defiance. There the matter rests for now. If those who admire the work of F. R. Leavis will not talk to us, we cannot make the film in any case. I still can't help feeling that that would be a pity.

WILL WYATT
BBC Television Centre
London
W12 7RJ

Goering vindicated

Sir, Alison McLeod's informant (NS 4 August) was misinformed: the quotation at the end of her piece – *'Wer ein Jude ist bestimme ich'* – has never, to my knowledge, been attributed to Goering or, indeed, to any National Socialist. The true author was Dr Karl Lueger, socialist mayor of Vienna at the time of Francis Joseph.

STEPHEN HARRISON
Travellers' Club
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5EP

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Arthur Koestler

A Note on 'Darkness at Noon'

Novels must speak for themselves; the author's voice should not intrude between the work and the reader until the reading is over. Hence this postcript instead of a preface.

Darkness at Noon is the second novel of a trilogy – the other two are *The Gladiators* and *Arrival and Departure* – which revolves around the central theme of the ethics of violence: the problem of whether, or to what extent, a noble end justifies ignoble means. Every political leader is confronted with this dilemma at some stage of his career, but for the leaders of revolutionary movements – from the slave revolt in the first century BC (the theme of *The Gladiators*) to the Old Bolsheviks of the 1930s and the urban guerrillas in the 1970s – the dilemma assumes a particularly stark reality, which is both immediate and timeless. It was the realisation of this timeless aspect of Stalin's regime of terror which made me write *Darkness at Noon*.

I joined the Communist Party in 1931, at the age of 26, when I was science editor of a liberal newspaper in Berlin. I joined the Party because it seemed to offer the only alternative to Nazism and Fascism; but also because, like Auden, Brecht, Malraux, Dos Passos, Silone, Picasso and other writers and artists of my generation, I felt irresistibly attracted by the utopian promise of a classless society which Russia held out to the Western world in the throes of economic depression and political crisis. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, I was already in the Soviet Union, where I spent a year as a guest of the Russian Writers' Federation. From Moscow I went to Paris where I lived until France collapsed and I managed to escape to England. Altogether I remained a member of the Party for seven years.

My progressive disillusionment reached an acute stage in 1935, the year when the Great Purge started, which was to sweep most of my comrades away. But the following year I became involved in the Spanish Civil War and spent four months in Franco's prisons. This, and other diversions, which I have described elsewhere (*The Invisible Writing, The God That Failed,* etc), postponed the final break with the Party until 1938. In the same year I started writing *Darkness at Noon*.

The decisive episode which led to the break was the trial of the so-called 'Anti-Soviet Block of Rightists and Trotskyists' which was staged in the spring of that year in Moscow. It surpassed in absurdity and horror everything that had gone before. The defendants were: Nikolai Bukharin, President of the Communist International in succession of Zinoviev who had been shot two years earlier; Christian Rakovsky, former head of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, former Soviet Ambassador to England and France; Nikolai Krestinsky, predecessor of Stalin as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, former Soviet Ambassador to Germany; Alexei Rykov, successor to Lenin as President of the Council of People's Commissars. Finally Yagoda, organiser of the previous Moscow trials, head of the G.P.U. in succession to Medjinsky, whom Yagoda confessed to having poisoned. He also confessed that he had poisoned the writer Maxim Gorky. To fathom the depth of absurdity reached in this trial one must realise that if the confessions of the accused were true, then it followed that the Soviet Union and the Communist International, during the first 20 years of their existence, had been ruled by saboteurs and secret agents of the capitalist powers.

To the Western mind, ignorant of the Soviet system and the power of Marxist dialectics, the confessions in the Show Trials appeared as one of the great enigmas of our time. Why had the Old Bolsheviks, heroes and leaders of the Revolution, who had so often braved death that they called themselves 'dead men on furlough', confessed to these hair-raising lies? If one discounted those who were merely trying to save their necks, or trying to shield their families, or broke down under torture, there still remained a hard core of men with a revolutionary past of 30 or 40 years behind them, the veterans of Czarist prisons and Siberian exile, whose total and gleeful self-abasement remained inexplicable. It was this 'hard core' that Rubashov was meant to represent.

The explanation that emerged in the novel became known as the 'Rubashov theory of the confessions', and was the object of a prolonged public controversy. Gradually, however, the various techniques to induce mental breakdowns became known to the Western world by the picturesque term 'brainwashing'. It was successfully applied for the first time in the Moscow trials and after the war in other Punch-and-Judy shows staged in several satellite countries like Hungary and Czechoslovakia; even in North Korea. It was a versatile psychological technique which could be combined with physical torture or the administration of drugs, and could be further varied according to the victim's personality, powers of resistance and ethical beliefs. For the vast majority of the victims physical ill-treatment, threats and promises were sufficient to make them confess to having stolen the Eiffel Tower and sold it as scrap metal. *Darkness at Noon*, however, is chiefly concerned with a historically significant minority, the elite of Old Bolsheviks, the men who made the Russian Revolution, changed the destiny of the world, then sank into the mud of utter self-debasement. Their fantastic self-accusations were not prompted by beatings and the promise of country *datchas*. They died for reasons which reflected an ideology running amuck, but within the logic of their own faith. The Gletkins, cool practitioners of inquisitorial dialectics, succeeded in breaking the Rubashovs by appealing to the noblest aspects of man: his sense of duty and self-sacrifice. Those critics who failed to appreciate this and considered the 'Rubashov theory of the confessions' as too far-fetched, seemed to have commonsense on their side, but had no inkling of the magic attraction of totalitarian ideologies. Since the majority of politicians in the West belong to this category, they failed to grasp the lesson and the warning that it implied.

* * *

When *Darkness at Noon* was published in England in 1940, it was discussed in left-wing circles, but otherwise caused so little stir that at the end of its first year it had sold less than 4,000 copies. In France it was published after the end of the war and sold over 400,000 copies, breaking all previous records in French publishing history. But this was more of a political than a literary event. The Communists had emerged from the German Occupation as the strongest and best-organised force. At the time in question, 1946, they occupied various Cabinet posts in the Government, had direct control over the trade unions, and indirectly, through blackmail and intimidation, imposed their will to a considerable extent on the courts, on publishing and editorial offices, the film industry and literary cliques.

In this oppressive atmosphere, the novel on the Russian Purges, though dealing with events that lay ten years back, assumed a symbolic actuality, an allusive relevance which had a deeper psychological impact than a more directly topical book could have achieved. It happened to be the first moral indictment of Stalinism published in post-war France; and as it talked the authentic language of the Party, and had a Bolshevik of the Old Guard for its hero, it could not be easily dismissed as 'reactionary' and 'bourgeois'. Instead, the Communists tried to intimidate the publishers of the book. When they did not succeed, they bought up entire stocks of it from suburban and provincial bookshops and destroyed them. As a result, the book was sold in between reprints at blackmarket prices three to five times higher than the official price. When the circulation had passed the quarter-of-a-million mark, Communist speakers were instructed to attack book and author at their mass meetings. The pressure of intimidation may be gathered from the fact that the French translator found it advisable to hide behind a pseudonym, and subsequently to withdraw even that from the cover, so that no mention of a translator appears on later editions.

The controversy reached its peak during the fateful weeks preceding the referendum on the future form of the French constitution. If the Communists' formula had carried the day, this would have given them, as the numerically strongest party, nearly absolute control of the State. When the battle was over, one of the leading newspapers, summing up the campaign in its editorial, said that 'the most important single factor which led to the defeat of the Communists in the referendum on the Constitution, was a novel, *Le Zéro et l'Infini* [the French title]'. There are a few incidents in my life to which, in hours of depression, I turn for comfort. One of them is the episode that I have just told.

Darkness at Noon has been translated into 33 languages. Having previously circulated only in *samizdat*, it is finally available in Russian translation, from Chekhov Press, New York.

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Derek Mahon

The Wanderings of JBY

Prodigal Father: The Life of John Butler Yeats (1839-1922) by WILLIAM M. MURPHY *Cornell University Press* £17.50

In 1972 the National Gallery of Ireland held an exhibition of 138 paintings and drawings by J. B. Yeats. 'Finally,' concludes his biographer in an epilogue, '50 years after his death, the great Irish painter had his first one-man show.' 'JBY', as Mr Murphy refers to him throughout, was an immensely gifted artist who could never bring himself to finish a picture to his own satisfaction. Like Oscar Wilde, he put his talent into his work and his genius into his life. His famous self-portrait, which he began in 1911 and left unfinished at his death 11 years later, and which appears as a frontispiece to this book, shows him in a pose which must have been all too familiar to his sitters – pleasantly interrogative, bursting with suppressed garrulousness, holding a palette knife rather than a brush, the hands vague. (Significantly for such an impractical man, he could never 'do hands', concentrating instead on faces, and especially eyes.) His friends and patrons, whose attitude was unanimously one of affectionate exasperation, practically had to seize 'unfinished' work and carry it off by force.

Typically, JBY would set out to paint a woodland scene in spring. Spring would ripen into summer on the canvas, and in autumn the leaves he had painted earlier would wither and fall. Presently winter would arrive, and what had started out as a spring scene would be covered with snow. This, of course, would melt in time, and the rapt artist would find himself back where he started, an unfinished picture on his easel, the paint an inch thick, and the bills mounting. 'It is this infirmity of will', his son wrote later, 'which has . . . ruined his career. He even hates the sign of will in others.' When a friend boasted that he had 'no overdue work on his conscience', JBY commented wryly, 'I wish I had some overdue work on *my* conscience.' In his work, as in his intellectual life, everything was provisional. Hence his dislike of fixed 'opinions', which he passed on to his children. 'Opinions' he saw as only the first step on the road to 'convictions' and finally 'beliefs'. It was a road he had himself never travelled, always having been a believer – not in any formal religion, despite or because of the fact that his father was a Church of Ireland clergyman, but in the world about him, and in the essential goodness of the human species. This is amply illustrated by his pencil portraits, many of them reproduced here. Nobility informs the features of every man and woman – with the exception of Frank Harris, whom he did not like (the Harris sketch is very rudimentary). Aleister Crowley, with whom he also came into contact, he didn't sketch at all. He wasn't interested in the darker side of human nature.

JBY is remembered as a fine painter, but more often as the father of two more famous sons, the poet William and the artist Jack, with whom the father was often confused. As a promising young barrister (though he preferred sketching faces in court to following cases, and soon abandoned law for art) he married Susan Pollexfen, the daughter of a prosperous Sligo merchant family of Cornish origin, and they had four children. As well as Willie and Jack there were two daughters, Lily and Lollie, who founded a design centre and printing house, Cuala Industries Ltd., and published much of Willie's work in limited editions. JBY's marriage was not happy. His genial improvidence wore down his wife, who had inherited the bourgeois values of the Pollexfens and never came to terms with Bohemia: in accepting JBY she possibly imagined that she was marrying a future High Court judge. In any case, Mr Murphy describes their offspring as 'a triumph of genetics'. Young Jack, elusive and self-sufficient, escaped early from the tempestuous home-life; while the passionate relations between Willie and his father continued until the latter's death. It was no fun for the old man to watch his elder son succeed so spectacularly where he himself had failed – in the 'real world' – and, although he was proud of Willie and exercised a shaping influence on his mind (an influence Willie eventually came to acknowledge), there was much friction. One night at Bedford Park, during an argument about Ruskin (Willie was then 21), JBY broke the glass of a picture over his son's head. Not long afterwards there was an argument about metaphysics, 'entirely abstract and impersonal', and JBY, following Willie into his bedroom, squared up at him and wanted to fight. Willie, to great acclaim, had just published *The Wanderings of Oisin*, while his father was still vainly seeking commissions for his own work. In later life he would often touch his son for a few quid.

It has long been obvious that JBY would make a wonderful subject for biography; and *Prodigal Father* is in no way disappointing. Mr Murphy avoids the temptation of seeing the father through the eyes of the poet son; although, inevitably, there is much about Willie, and the introduction of this new perspective throws fresh light on an already floodlit area. JBY took a dim view of Willie's obsession with 'magic' (it was, says Mr Murphy, JBY's greatest mistake that he forced his own agnosticism down Willie's throat), disliked the affected and imperious Maud Gonne, and considered Lady Gregory a 'witch' ready to strike with her broomstick anyone who got in her way. The famous summers at Coole, where distinguished visitors were invited to carve their initials on a certain beech tree, are viewed somewhat reductively. (The tree is now surrounded by an iron railing, on which the present writer once tried, without success, to inscribe his own initials.) Another character who comes into focus is Lily, a witty diarist. Also the energetic New York lawyer and collector John Quinn, who played such an important part in the lives of all of them, becoming in time JBY's protector and benefactor. It was he who commissioned the unfinished self-portrait, for any sum JBY cared to name, thus ensuring the gregarious old man's continued application to his art, and the perpetual imminence of economic redemption.

JBY spent most of his adult life shuttling unsatisfactorily between Dublin and London. After the death of his wife, for whose unhappy decline he never forgave himself, he suddenly lit out for America, never to return. This was in 1907; the painter was then 68. (A Dublin wit described him as 'an old man who ran away from home and made good'.) Quinn put him up in style and introduced him to New York society. For a while he was lionised. Commissions poured in, and he was in demand as an after-dinner speaker. Asked if he was the father of 'the great Yeats', he replied, 'I *am* the great Yeats'. Old habits soon re-asserted themselves, however, the 'hopeless insolvency' of home giving way to 'hopeful insolvency'. He moved into a one-room apartment over an obscure French restaurant on 29th Street, where he remained until his death. But the Petitpas restaurant became a place of pilgrimage for young writers and artists, among them Conrad Aiken and Rockwell Kent. JBY, cigar in hand, would hold forth on any topic, while American youth hung on his every word. What had been intended as a stay of some months became permanent.

Family and friends in Dublin, alarmed by his long absence, conspired to bring home the 'pilgrim father', but to no avail. New York suited him. He enjoyed its egalitarianism, and the fact that 'Americans like old men'. 'In the street,' wrote the delinquent patriarch, 'I am invariably addressed as Colonel, or Professor, or Doctor. All three titles will come to me in the same conversation.' His sympathies remained perennially youthful. A Victorian and the son of a clergyman, he nevertheless thought highly of the scandalous Joyce, who had once tried to borrow money from him. Of

John Higgins

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the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art, which included work by Brancusi, Braque and Picasso, he wrote, 'I think these a splendid symptom, a bomb under convention.'

He was great value. A 'character' certainly, but a great deal besides, as this book makes abundantly clear. *Prodigal Father* is longer than it needed to be (points tend to be hammered in), but the author is to be congratulated on treating a magnificent subject magnificently. An unfinishing and unfinished old man has come into his own.

David McLellan

Capital Losses

Marx's Fate by JERROLD SEIGEL *Princeton University Press* £11

The production of books and articles on Marx shows no sign of abating. And many of them are valuable – Marx's rich legacy still needs exploration, though in increasingly specialised areas. To write a book covering the whole spectrum of Marx's life and thought, and to hope that it would be a significantly new contribution, is indeed ambitious, yet Professor Seigel has achieved just that: *Marx's Fate* will be read with profit by all those interested in Marx the man and the thinker. For Seigel knows his sources, writes forcefully, and, above all, has something new to say.

Seigel tells us that his work is psychological biography. He writes from a revised Freudian viewpoint, tempered by an awareness of the social dimension of each individual and work in the tradition of Erik Erikson. Marx's writings are interpreted through a set of symbols and patterns that date from his earliest years. His *oeuvre* represents, according to Seigel, a constant – and ultimately unsuccessful – struggle to overcome the residue of abstraction in his thought when faced with the demands of empirical reality. The resultant account is certainly superior to the only other major effort in this field – that by the Jungian Arnold Künzli who attempts to explain almost all of Marx's ideas through the notion of 'Jewish self-hate'. (Possibly Seigel goes to the other extreme, for he affords Marx's Jewishness no significant part in his analysis.)

There has long been controversy as to the continuity of Marx's thought, and Seigel comes down firmly on the side of those who reject the idea of any radical break in Marx. The psychological needs of Marx's passage from adolescence to maturity did indeed turn him against his early philosophical humanism in 1845-46. In the changed historical context of the 1850s and 1860s, however, Marx was forced to return to some of the youthful positions he had thought to abandon before. As a result, the psychological dilemmas he had struggled to resolve in the 1840s returned too. The situation which Marx faced in his London years was thus a compound of three things: the historical changes that made the experiences and perspectives of the 1840s questionable guides to theory and practice; the methodological dilemmas created by the need to respond to these changes; and the personal and psychological conditions that these historical and intellectual problems both framed and intensified. On this stage was played out the great tragedy of Marx's life: his failure to finish *Capital*.

As with most scholars who have seen Marx's thought as a continuity, Seigel stresses the influence of Hegel and the centrality of Marx's *Grundrisse*. However, his psychological approach enables him to give this view two novel facets. First, he sees Hegel as being a notable psychologist in his own right in describing, in his *Encyclopaedia*, a life-cycle with a stress on adolescent crises that is very similar to Erikson's. These psychological insights were firmly tied in with Hegel's idea of alienation and the dialectical idea of inversion which Seigel sees as being equally central to Hegel's (and Marx's) thought. Secondly, those who have stressed the continuity of Marx's thought have usually gone back to the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844 to find a link with *Capital*. Seigel goes right back to Marx's doctoral thesis and discovers in the Greek atomist philosopher Democritus the source of Marx's dilemma. Democritus is supposed to have blinded himself so that the experience of the senses would not interfere with the inner light of the intellect. According to Seigel, Marx originally thought that philosophy would produce true knowledge and then in the late 1840s abandoned abstraction in favour of a sort of empiricism. In the 1850s he was forced to return to the Democritean dilemma by means of a renewed Hegelianism which tried to mediate the lack of concordance between empirical reality and theoretical expectation. The persistence of this dilemma, compounded by personal circumstances, culminated in Marx's inability to finish *Capital*.

Seigel is particularly good on the emergence of the appearance/reality dichotomy in Marx in the late 1850s, on his declining interest in the rate of profit, and on the relation of the *Grundrisse* to *Capital* in general. He has also incorporated into his account some interesting research on the original manuscripts for *Capital* that Engels later had to edit. But his most evident strength lies in his account of the relationships within the Marx family. Here his interest in psychology enables him to give a first-class analysis. With the more intellectual side of Marx's life there is always the problem that emphasis on the psychological dimension may tend to minimise the validity and force of the ideas themselves.

Many of the most valuable contemporary contributions to the broad area of human studies come from those who, like Marx himself, refuse to encase themselves within the confines of one narrow discipline. Seigel's work is an encouraging example of interdisciplinary connection – a kind of psycho-history. The parallel attempt of Steven Marcus in *Engels, Manchester and the Working Class* comes to mind. The difficulty, of course, lies in a successful integration that avoids both a simple juxtaposition in which the two disciplines simply sleep peacefully side by side and the triumph of one at the expense of the other. Seigel has avoided the first danger. Whether he has avoided the second, I am not sure. He has certainly made the best attempt to date.

John Mole

After Childhood

The kids have finished being Batman;
capes abandoned on the floor
become two duffles, lined with tartan,
back to what they were before.

How effortlessly such manoeuvres
make us human; shedding skins,
one dream another dream discovers
then, after childhood, time begins.

Peter Conrad

Bodysnatchers

Lawrence and Women edited by Anne Smith *Vision* £6.40

Lawrence criticism has always been self-helping psychotherapy for repressed academics. In the 1960s the critical correlative of the Wolfenden report was John Sparrow's smirking revelation that Mellors the priapic gamekeeper favoured rear entry. The satyr dwindled into a bugger. In the 1970s Lawrence is the victim not of coy male prurience like Sparrow's but of shrill female aggression. Critics now represent him not as a cowardly, unliberated homosexual but as a sadistic oppressor of liberated, wilful women. Some of the contributors to *Lawrence and Women* accuse him of piggish chauvinism: Faith Pullin, mobilising the jaw- and ball-breaking jargon of feminism, solemnly opines that Lawrence suppresses 'woman as a thinking being, operating in any but a supportive and reinforcing manner with her mate'. Others slyly arrogate to him membership of their own sex: Anne Smith's Lawrence is a dainty transvestite, tarted up in his mother's blue checked apron confecting potato cakes, or busying himself with his needle in the parlour, trimming hats for Frieda or cross-stitching baby frocks for Catherine Carswell.

Lawrence caters conveniently to all varieties of disgruntlement. The male essayists supply their own idiosyncratic grudges: Julian Moynahan, for instance, writes about Lawrence as a spokesman for Celtic liberation. Learned and sober as it is, Moynahan's piece suffers from the volume's queasy conscience. *Lawrence and Women* can't decide whether it is critical or polemical, exploratory or extrapolatory, and Moynahan, after a useful survey of Lawrence's notion of the Celt and its provenance in Arnold, Havelock Ellis and George Meredith, hypes up his conclusion into a rallying-cry, claiming Lawrence as a proponent of 'women's liberation and the liberation of all from the fettered past'. That phrase catches the idiom of contemporary humbug. All of us must be liberated, and even if we lack a specific grievance we can petition for release from the burden of our own past. (The meaning of wisdom used to be reconciliation with that past.) To be in the majority is no longer chic: we must redeem ourselves by enrolling in one or another minority. No one can afford to be without a cause, and to those (academics, for instance) whose every worldly whim is catered for already, one stratagem remains: you can politicise your own sexual-

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ity, and turn your body into an apparatus for the conduct of biological warfare.

You can also, of course, annex literary criticism to this state of military preparedness, and write in propagandist contempt of your subject, as many of the contributors to *Lawrence and Women* do. The worst of the essays traduce Lawrence by treating his imaginative freedom – his effort to feel himself into existences other than his own, his transformation of moral omniscience into sensual empathy – as evidence of what Faith Pullin clinically calls his 'psychic limitation'. Anne Smith is snide about his insecure envy of the physical plenitude of others, and marks this down as an admission of his covert femininity. However, it is also an attribute of his novelistic inquiry into 'all that is not himself'. Seeing a man with a flourishing moustache in an opera brochure, Lawrence said, 'I should like to be that man.' To Anne Smith, this is pathologically poignant. She seems not to recognise the imaginative significance of the yearning: Joyce and Virginia Woolf were content to insert themselves into the intelligences of their characters; Lawrence wanted to inhabit their bodies.

The best essay in the volume neatly sabotages the whole enterprise. Mr Mark Kinkead-Weekes warns against the brash merchandising of sexuality and pretentious chitchat about cathexes and role-models elsewhere by disarmingly pointing out 'the sheer difficulty of completing a sentence that begins, "Lawrence's treatment of sexual relationship in *Sons and Lovers* . . . ".' His trio of dots mutely begs pardon for the biological bigotry and interpretative crassness displayed by his colleagues.

This English

In Shiva Naipaul's novels the Trinidadian characters all favour the nob's pronoun – not only in the accusative ('That's the way to treat she') but also in the genitive ('Too big for she boots'). Perhaps this tells us something about Mr Osborne and Miss Pilkington. Two nasty manglers and a roving apposition. Oh, and literally literally means literally. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ No, this is not the way for we Londoners, as we once were, to conduct ourselves, fawning for foreign pennies. **John Osborne** *Evening Standard* (Valerie Jenkins)

☐ Most Rhodesians, she says, have left money behind. Many, like she and Peter, have insurance policies they can't cash . . . **Sue Pilkington** *Daily Mail* (John Porteous)

☐ A. S. Leslie's characterisation of the joggers of West Hampstead as 'heavy jowelled and paunchy' may well be accurate . . . I can assure him, however, that the joggers of Highbury eschew a more lean and hungry look. **Terry Cubitt** *Guardian* (A. R. Black)

☐ Beknighted in 1968, Busby retired as the manager the following year. **John Roberts** *Guardian* (J.R.G.)

☐ A recipe for Sheftalia caught my eye, which serves six. **Harold Wilshaw** *Guardian* (Sandy Walker)

☐ Miss Navratilova also played superbly, literally knocking 15-year-old Tracey Austin off the court. *Scotsman* (James R. Little)

Zahir Jamal

Pressed Men

The Volunteers by RAYMOND WILLIAMS *Eyre Methuen* £4.95
The Voice of The Sea and Other Stories by ALBERTO MORAVIA *Secker* £4.50
Violet Clay by GAIL GODWIN *Gollancz* £5.95

All dominant cultures conscript, but in most societies they get plenty of volunteers. It's 20 years since Raymond Williams produced his seminal critical history of that phenomenon's workings in Britain; and *Culture and Society* remains a powerfully reasoned case for resisting enlistment. The alternative cause Williams has unfailingly recommended, in discourse of varying difficulty but uniformly vigorous intelligence, is a common culture embodying the relations of an authentic community. The serious merits of the advice and the acknowledged brilliance of its source have not, however, prevented it from being almost universally disregarded. A generation which in the Sixties adopted Williams as its pathfinder proceeded through the Seventies to take the beaten track the other way. The making of a new radical politics continues, of course, in 'hard' groups outside the orthodox debates. *The Volunteers* is a tribute to their dedication and an undiscouraged message for their lapsed peers; a parable of the commitment that went missing in a sour and vacant decade.

Knocking back the grin-and-bitters in a fug of half-perceived complicity is Lewis Redfern, 'consultant analyst on the political underground' for the Insatel news service. It's the 1980s, and Redfern, formerly an activist, now turns the history he once shared into 'sweet newsline narrative' for public consumption. An old cracked tune played his generation out when it emerged from the active movement looking for new initiatives: the need for a settled income, the soothing noises of the recruiters and then, after the interviews, the spectacle of 'the voluntary work of a decade becoming funded and incorporated along impeccably liberal lines'. Redfern himself treads an Orwellian line between two worlds. Neither a disengaged observer nor a contributing participant, he lives an intolerable split at times audible in his self-wounding narration; and it's through the fluctuating negations and sympathies of his reports that a double 'political thriller' is artfully enacted.

In the outer world of scenes and incidents, Redfern is compulsively drawn after the unknown object of his latest investigation: the mysterious assailant of a government minister shot and injured on a visit to Wales. Recognising in the attempt an older and harsher psychology than the police story indicates, he begins a chase which forces him to connect the fragments of his discarded politics. As straight detective stuff, this level attains a high cunning worthy of Graham Greene, with its false trails, enigmatic clues and suspenseful action leading to a hidden world of entrist organisations, 'ultra' groups and media censorship. And as in vintage Greene, the action produces a double image; for the hunter is, of course, his own game, reconstructing through the chase not one identity but two. Reaching past his cynicism to get at his quarry's motives, Redfern finds himself construing a network of relations at once familiar and altered; volunteered by his own gathering momentum for a confrontation with the Volunteers.

Faith, historical or celestial, lost or recovered, seldom appears to advantage in fiction's unflattering light, and Williams's type of psychopolitics does have its blurry edges. Redfern's cynicism, essential for the impact of his prodigal return, loses believability when he offers principled decodings of establishment behaviour. The sense of community posited as a goal and represented here, as elsewhere in Williams's thought, by the Welsh working class, seems quixotically unequal to the alienating forces the novel sharply understands. Redfern's narrative, it's true, can reach a driven, compelling authority beside which heathen cavils are apt to sound weak and nagging; but its distinction lies not so much in this partisan thrust as in the head-clearing insights that follow. The occupation of a power depot seen first from a news angle and then, accurately, from within; a demonstration experienced not as aggression but as 'a series of small sharp movements, almost all of them defensive'; a caustic reading of the 'folk-history' attached to a people called, 'in that Saxon word for foreigner, Welsh'. Conventional sympathies may be discomfited by the neglected efforts this kind of vision requires them to make; but as Williams is here to tell us, that form of voluntary work could go a long way.

A finely attentive and judging engagement with the female predicament has always distinguished Alberto Moravia's work from that

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of conventional male well-wishers. The speaking subjects of the 30 self-portraits voiced in this collection make up an alertly differentiated chorus of ever more recognisable and unsettling identity. In brief, lucid accounts of harmonising or counterpointed theme, Moravia's women interpret, with ominous detachment, their estrangement in contexts where they figure chiefly as commodities. The milieu selected for them is predominantly commercial. Stockbroking, accounting, insuring and marketing are what their menfolk like to do. The women themselves tend to serve in banks and shops. Long accustomed as a sex to regarding their bodies through the proprietary eyes of their consorts, Moravia's women audit their anatomies with professionally disinterested thoroughness. In toneless lists they tell of mannequin-like legs, triangular or oval faces, delicate or snub noses, ripe figures and hairless limbs; of inviting groins and generous busts, luxuriant and tapered ankles. Nor are the ill-favoured any less forthcoming:

> I have a narrow, forward-sloping face, all artificial colours and tight-drawn skin . . . my black hair protrudes in two glossy, comma-shaped locks; but they leave uncovered my big, cartilaginous ears like those of a large, elderly ape . . . My unbuttoned blouse gives a glimpse of two breasts, exiguous and distant from one another . . . my narrow, clinging trousers conceal the fleshless rigidity of my legs.

What is ugly, of course, is the fact of an inventory like this and not its contents. There is a hard, assessing feel to all these self-appraisals through which the women register and then disown their features. And this deformity of vision which marks the self-estranged is inevitably mirrored damagingly in their relationships with men. Outwardly perfectly adapted to male requirements, the majority of these women utterly reject their husbands and lovers, claiming in private that singleness denied them by their soul-dividing lot in the public eye. Moravia's watchful prose alertly notices the bewildered, involuntary nature of these self-assertions; the puzzled, distant challenge to themselves of women who confront, behind their 'enigmatic' narrations, the strangers of their consciousness.

Moravia's sure touch would doubtless appeal to Gail Godwin. Her pleasingly deft novel about a young illustrator's overdue appointment with herself has poise and ironic depth. Godwin's unsentimental and observant style is well suited to her likeable heroine's plight. Violet Clay puts her troubles, past and present, out of her thoughts by putting them into her work. She draws endless illustrations of fugitive maidens for the covers of innumerable gothic novels while cherishing thoughts of the day she will become a serious artist. A triple-decker custard pie from above forces a sharp review of her career, and the novel soon has her facing up to some cool facts about her men, her work and the spectres in her past. It's all managed by a crisp prose that never lets the dialogue down. Godwin populates her fiction with some discernment; her characters don't assume that the upsets in their psyches are going to matter much to anyone else. Domestic rows culminate refreshingly in a recognition that, while fiction can be clichéd, life never is. The routine poses assumed by Violet and boyfriend Jake after they start to go for the jugular are neatly exposed when Jake's clothes, thrown out of a window during the scrap, are seen proceeding down the night-time street atop a passing Cadillac.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Ian Hamilton

Those Wide Open Spaces

The Woman *Olivier*

Edward Bond's new play has already been praised for managing to 'fill' the huge stage of the Olivier Theatre, as if this were somehow an achievement in itself, a sure mark of epic scope and grandeur. A perilous line of commendation, I'd have thought, and all the more so with a playwright anxious to be regarded as a sage whose dire insights we are all too unhealthy to ignore. Bond indeed revels in the mighty spaces, both as author and director. But should we be stunned that he contrives to gather 40 thespians on stage and have them, as it were, cover every blade of grass – cavorting, murdering, debating with gay, open-plan abandon? Or gasp when he mounts a few spectacular set-pieces that make boyishly delighted use of the Olivier's technology? No doubt we should, but regrettably there is more to going epic than mere weight of numbers, and most of the time the immensity Bond moves around in simply serves to expose the thin, schematic nature of his gift. It certainly doesn't elevate his disaffected ponderings to that majestic level of disturbance where he so evidently and so irritatingly imagines they belong.

The first part of the play (all 90 minutes of it, with as many more to follow in Part Two) is set in Troy towards the end of the fabled hostilities, but it is not the A-level Troy we hazily remember. No horse, no Helen, no Achilles heel. But then again, it *is* more or less the same *type* of confrontation. Here the Greeks are besieging Troy in order to recover a luck-bringing statue of a goddess. The Trojans – with Priam dead and Hecuba briefly in charge – correctly feel that if there is any luck left in the world it ought surely to be theirs. Of the assembled personnel, Hecuba we do remember (at any rate by name) and so too Thersites – although neither of these in Bond's presentation bears much resemblance to the legends nor to subsequent literary versions. (A pity, this, for I'd rather been looking forward to seeing how the NT's conjuring department would handle Hecuba's metamorphosis.) As to the rest, I'm afraid a systematic hunt through Lemprière and a full 15 minutes with Euripides in Foyles drew mocking blanks. If scholars are thus baffled, one can only guess at the bewilderment of those first-nighters who lacked real training in the classics.

No doubt they, along with Bond, would say it doesn't matter; that myths are there to be refashioned, and so much the better if the originals are pretty much forgotten. Who should mind, therefore, that Heros – the leader of Bond's Greeks – is an invention, an emblematic stand-in for Achilles, Neoptolemus and all the regular Greek heavies? And since the presence of his wife on the battlefront is in itself fairly implausible, does it matter that she is the untraceable Ismene and that she is granted a crucial role in precipitating the sack of Troy, the murder of Astyanax, and the self-blinding (as it turns out, in one eye) of Hecuba? Ismene, sickened by the war, offers herself as a hostage to the Trojans; they will set her free when the Greeks have withdrawn. Woman to woman, she chats to Hecuba about the folly of these man-made bloodbaths and they do a women's deal, thus infuriating the warrior Greeks and giving Hecuba's unnamed, yet sinisterly mincing son an opportunity for insurrection. In no time at all, the two intuitive ladies are squatting grumpily at front stage left: 'I'm in prison too' – 'How they've shorn your hair.'

The warlords, though, are not going to have it their own way. Got at on both sides by corrupt and fawning priests (Bond's heavy-handedness is nowhere more evident than in these cartoons of clerical opportunism) the male bruisers are further undermined by an outbreak of plague among the proletariat. Emboldened by their contagious frightfulness, the ragged underdogs attack Hecuba's son as he stands in triumph (lucky statue held aloft) on the steps of the Trojan temple; none of his bodyguards dares touch the cankered proles and with much bellowing and flapping of fouled raiment they bring the new king down and frolic off across the 'huge stage of the Olivier' bearing the statue, FA-Cup style, to . . . well, who knows where? With Hecuba reinstated and Ismene railing at her menfolk from the battlements – your routine pacifist harpie on the brink of a self-expressive nervous breakdown – little wonder that Heros (burdened beyond endurance by the disapproval of his author) decides that enough has finally become enough. He moves into Troy and makes merry with his sword, and the Olivier's bangs-and-screams department backs him all the way. The first part of the play ends with many an 'Ah me!', and protracted acts of military horror. Unfortunately, the share-out of the Trojan women is omitted, presumably because so many of the best-known beneficiaries aren't in the cast. In any case, Ismene has been bricked up in one of the few Trojan walls left standing, and Hecuba – as I've said – is no longer looking her best.

Part Two, however, discovers the intrepid women in a new, becalmed but mysterious location, pottering about on the shores of an unnamed island and now and then breaking off from sybilline ruminations to jig along with their neighbouring fisherfolk to the advanced strains of Hans Werner Henze. Where are they, how did they get there, and how is it that they are still thought of by the Greeks to be in possession of the lucky statue? Is Ismene mad, or is it because she is in touch with deeper-than-deep wells of human feeling that she falls for a crippled ex-miner who has strayed on to the island to seek refuge from the Greeks? Has Hecuba made contact with new veins of truth behind her eye-patch? The miner, a special case if ever there was one, makes clear in one lengthy speech that he has suffered sufficiently at the hands of Athenian democracy (and what kind of democracy was it,

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Bond seems to be asking, that sustained itself with myths of a tyrannical, bloodthirsty past?) to be in rich spiritual contact with the victimised Trojan women. He may be partial to the odd ungainly bout of slap-and-tickle, but when Heros and his buddies arrive on the island to demand again the return of the lost totem, it is clear that we are supposed to set their butch insecurities against the level consistency of feeling to which injustice and misery has introduced this 'Dark Man', as Bond dubs him in the cast list. As Heros disintegrates, the dusky miner, backed by Hecuba's deepening other-worldliness, swells into the kind of manliness Bond would suggest we should admire. The play's climax is a race between Heros and the miner, which Heros – by some funny business that I didn't follow – manages to lose, thus forfeiting his life.

Throughout all this, scant intelligence is required to follow the main 'themes' and there was sufficient blood and thunder – at any rate in the first half – to keep one from feeling too put upon by their banality. The pretentiously written set speeches (at one point we are required to think of the sea as like a bed that's just been turned down, a mirror, and then – within syllables – as a surface we could toboggan on) are often swamped quickly enough by some brutal or co-operative event, so that true exasperation has had no chance to take root. But exasperation with this play is in the end exasperation with its grand notion of itself, its smug polarisations, its pretence to epic sweep, its high-minded indifference to the real world it so turgidly addresses. High marks for acting, though, to Nicky Henson (his presence rather than his voice), Yvonne Bryceland and Susan Fleetwood. And also, I suppose, to Andrew Cruikshank – though he ought to see a doctor about that rusty throat.

Sport

Russell Davies

White Power

If by any chance this column, in its tiny yet somehow annoying way, has helped to bring Mike the Psych Brearley back into the paths of runfulness, then glory be. One fifty, even in a Test Match, doesn't make him all that full of runs, I suppose, but at least his backlift routine now looks a little less like a Trooping the Bat ceremony and a little more like cricket. He has certainly had a crease-attitude rethink. He used, as we said, to straighten up into the horror-stricken pose of a man who had just spotted a slimy tentacle looping over the top of the distant sightscreen. Now, he looks like a man who, having *once* spotted such a thing, is suddenly gripped by the fear that he's about to spot it again, but manages to quell his superstitious panic in time to get the bat down in the crease again a moment before the ball arrives. The next stage in his autodidactic rehabilitation will come when he realises that since the bat starts off in the right place, and finishes in the right place (just), it isn't worth moving it at all in the intervening time.

Brearley's aggressive shots on the off-side, I thought, were much the most impressively smooth ones played in England's big innings at Trent Bridge. He struggled in between times, it's true, but it seems hard that struggling should be a crime in Brearley's case and a heroic spectacle in Boycott's. It's because Boycott tends to struggle as far as 100, I don't doubt; but his first 50, these days, is invariably painful to behold – and was attended, on this last occasion, by some of the best luck that has been had since Moses happened on a burst water-main in the desert. When Sir Len Hutton, writing in the *Observer*, remarked that if Boycott fell out of a tree, he would fall into a new suit, all he neglected to say was that the new suit would be Brearley's.

The Willis catch-behind decision in the First Test, and at least one of the lbw appeals Boycott survived, already had the New Zealand tourists trembling with paranoia before the third day of the Trent Bridge game. So how were they supposed to feel when umpires Constant and Spencer took the players on in dungeonesque light last Saturday, allowed two balls to be bowled, and then marched off again to watch the heavens piddle gently on the pitch for four turf-enlivening hours? I admire the concentration, stamina and nobly buttoned lip of our umpires; I do not doubt their integrity. But really, sometimes I wonder if they are all that bee-ar-eye-tee-ee. Strictly disinterested decisions are all very well, but any sporting arbiter should have enough sense of self-preservation not to make decisions that *look* as bad as this one – if only because the provocation involved makes the job of maintaining impartiality that much more difficult (because more conspicuous) ever after.

According to the reports I have seen, only one world record was broken at the Commonwealth Games. I forget who did it: probably Donna Hartley in the 400 Metres Male-Stunning. If we boast nothing else in our British athletics, we do have a great many competitors whom it is hard to take your eyes off even when they are losing. La Hartley, La Colyear, Messrs D. Thompson and K. Cooper and A. Pascoe – we are heading for the situation where all the lovely movers are also handsome folk at rest. The link between health 'n' efficiency and beauty begins to seem almost unfairly strong. As if to emphasise this further, the fates at Edmonton stomped cruelly on one of our comparatively glamourless representatives: the balding Richard Ashton, whose hammering dash to win the 4 x 400 metres relay was wiped out by the disqualification of an earlier runner. This was a remarkable performance by Ashton, particularly as the suspicion that a protest would ensue must have minutely disabled his will-to-win. But somebody up there didn't like his legs.

The Austrian Grand Prix almost won me over to motor sport. It rained, and competitors were soon shooting off the track in such numbers that the cameras had to pan around pretty desperately to find a car still going. Time and again, glistening heaps of technology were discovered sitting in fields, steaming gently. Drivers were observed plodding along the road flinging their gloves at anyone who came near. Two interlocking vehicles waltzed off sedately into the daisies; another came flying into shot backwards, leaving most of its rear end on the wall, like a squashed wasp. Nobody was hurt. For non-drivers, anarchists and wet-rubber addicts alike, it was a wonderful spectacle.

Meanwhile, our own autumn approaches. It was not the rain that reminded me of the implacable shift of the seasons – it was the spectator who, during Sunday's John Player TV cricket match, suddenly shouted 'Come on the Whites!'

Radio

Peter Porter

The Insider

Bookshelf, Radio 4's new salute to literacy, has got off to a bad start. The first edition did almost everything wrong, and the second showed only a slight improvement. The intention must be to get away from the familiar pattern of a bundle of reviews interspersed with authors talking about their books, but its tone is uneasy and its sprightliness forced. Frank Delaney, the presenter, has been encouraged to make the programme a rendezvous with the cult of personality. Books, the notion seems to be, are things people feel personally about, and audiences will warm to Frank's spicing his information with memories of his Irish childhood and liberal quotations from his prejudices about the shapes, sizes and colours of books and chat about colophons and illustrations. He signs off with, 'It's goodbye from me and my books', which grates badly, since he didn't write them and we the listeners don't have the same tomes on our shelf that Frank has.

There has been no programme devoted to books on Radio 4 for some time, but *Kaleidoscope* notices several newly published volumes every week and manages to do so without being coy or proprietorial. I detect in *Bookshelf* the most favoured tone for modern broadcasting – the inside report, the special correspondent's investigation. I don't know if readers of the NS would prefer me to be their man in the corridors of Broadcasting House, but I couldn't do it, even if it were asked of me. To mount an Insight team's penetration of publishing is beyond the financial resources of Radio 4, and nothing less would justify Delaney's insider's approach. Interviewing publishers about marketing paperbacks, librarians about children's books and antiquarian booksellers about a Sotheby auction may seem one way of galvanising a specialist subject, but, in the end, it distracts the casual listener and puts off the knowledgeable one. And could Mr Delaney be less breezy? If someone were to suggest to him that he is a highbrow, he might settle down to unpopularity and cease trying to endear himself to his audience. I have only one practical suggestion to offer the producers of *Bookshelf*: they shouldn't avoid the issue – any regular book programme must be largely a set of reviews. The real challenge is to find new ways of reviewing fiction, biography and poetry on the air. Mr Delaney's approach is an irrelevance.

'Even God couldn't get a day on the Test,' said one of the custodians of the most high-priced stretch of water in the world. The River Test in Hampshire is where the really privileged trout-fishers go. Fishing rights on its banks may cost you £1,000 a year, and the

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people of Stockbridge and its vicinity make a good living out of visiting anglers. Every inch of the stream is privately owned; and Keith Allan took his tape recorder to a few of the more cherished runs to bring back the sounds of the river gurgling and an angler describing the last minutes of a fighting trout. Some years ago I had a few drinks at an inn on the banks of the Test and looked into the river from the heights of a local bridge. I saw clearly dozens of fat trout idling in the depths beneath. I had no idea I was looking at the most expensive fish in the world. *The River Test* (Radio 4) properly left all social oddities unstressed, but it certainly modified some of my notions of English Pastoral.

A Word in Edgeways (Radio 4, Saturday nights) is one of the BBC's longest-running programmes, and it can be fairly described as offering the only true conversation on radio. Conversation, that is, not debate, symposium or lecture. Brian Redhead gets three people into the Manchester studios, proposes a topic to them and thereafter merely joins in. As with conversations in private life, people repeat themselves, fail to finish sentences and often speak when someone else is talking. The lack of discipline, of chilly professionalism, is refreshing. The speakers are usually experts in their own right, but they are not picked for their celebrity. It is almost all gain that one says to oneself, on looking at the billing in the *Radio Times*, 'I've never heard of any of them.'

Last week, the topic was opera, and the programme sounded entirely characteristic. Stephen Oliver and Hamish Swanston, who compose and criticise operas, had to talk to Louis Allen, who knows nothing about opera and talks rubbish on the topic. They performed wonders trying to counter his wilfully obtuse arguments and Brian Redhead was forced to back him up to give the programme some sense of balance. That a man with an academic background could be so silly must have surprised the listening public. But a black mark for the other side: Professor Swanston's being a theologian may account for his refusing Puccini the title of a real composer, but it does not excuse it. Stephen Oliver went out on a prophetic note – 'Opera rules,' he cried: 'It is taking over the world.'

Radio 4 has launched a Friday night comedy show which is funny. *A Little Night Exposure* has many things against it – it is a musical serial, dealing with the adventures of a performing troupe of actors and singers, and both script and songs are thick with puns and faintly blue jokes. What saves it is that it is good: fine acting, inventive music and funny situations. Anthony Smee, as the show's entrepreneur, told a potential backer at the end of the first episode, 'It won't get better, but they can do more.' What they have done already is enough to earn the programme a strong recommendation. *George Meredith in Love* (Radio 4) told the story of the novelist's unhappy marriage to Peacock's daughter, but was chiefly valuable for the passages it quoted from his remarkable sonnet-sequence *Modern Love*, and for compiler John Carr-Gregg's tribute to Meredith's analysis of male chauvinism in *The Egoist*. Alas that this should have come 20 years after his wife's death.

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Television

Julian Barnes

Which She Did

Here is an influential plot-summary of a well-known TV play:

'Shit' – many times
'Christ Almighty' – many times
'Bloody Christ Almighty'
'Bugger off'
'Little bitch'
'You rotten cow'
'You filthy bugger'
'Take your knickers off' – which she did
'Give it to her, Jew boy' – from a tramp watching a couple have sex.

This is the National Viewers and Listeners Association's version of an episode of *Pennies from Heaven,* as laid out in their pamphlet *What Price Annan!*. Normally, one would hope to laugh away the NVLA's yokel puritanism ('Described in *Radio Times* as "Anarchic comedy". Anarchic Yes. Comedy No') and let their arguments self-destruct on the page: 'If individuals wish to behave like the couple in the play, that is their affair. The rest of us should not be turned into voyeurs of kinky sexual practices.' ('Kinky', in NVLA terms, includes such things as a man holding a woman's breasts.)

Alas, they can't be laughed away. Lord Annan recently dignified them in a speech, and it's clear the BBC are running scared. The repeat of Barrie Keefe's *Gotcha,* scheduled for this Tuesday at 10.25 (an hour later than originally shown, in deference to the NVLA) was cancelled by the Director-General, Ian Trethowan. The BBC then issued the following cryptic statement:

> Last month the governors held a discussion with drama programme heads about programme values. In the course of this discussion it was agreed that there should be, among other things, a fresh look at the language used in programmes.

'A fresh look', of course, means 'a very old look'; and 'programme values' means 'getting rid of filth'. The shame of this pitiable retrenchment isn't just that the BBC has decided to fall in with the moral and aesthetic standards of a Colchester housewife who notes rude words down on a pad and imagines that kids don't know them all already; more depressingly, it's that this is another demonstration of institutional distrust of the writer. What publisher, or theatre management, would show as much contempt for the serious dramatists they employ? Doesn't it occur to the BBC that writers actually spend a long time thinking about the effect of their works? It's no coincidence that Keefe is the first to suffer from the new 'programme values', since *What Price Annan!* singles out three of his plays for special comment, and describes *Gotcha* as 'one long obscene gesture to the Annan Report and the Government'. The same pamphlet calls Dennis Potter 'a brilliant playwright with perceptive things to say'; the BBC would doubtless agree; but this won't stop either organisation instructing him how to say them.

It's been a fairly dismal week all round on the box. LWT's new prestige series *Stalin: the Red Czar* has so far come up with the insights that Pope Joe was a bad guy; that he helped kill people; and that he rewrote history to suit himself. At present, all that holds the attention is the occasional furry pre-Revolutionary clip of peasants harvesting, threshing and having an awful time (film researcher Rick Wiseman). Maybe it would help to change the soundtrack ratio: at present it offers one minute of commentary (full of rough paradox and phrases like 'this was not a land for dreamers') for every three minutes of lollipops from the great Russian opera classics. At least the rough paradox of *The Funeral of Pope Paul VI* (BBC-2) was altogether more lighthearted. How the Pope would have enjoyed the 'simple' funeral he'd asked for: the stunning evening light over St Peter's, the worldwide networked audience, the college of cardinals leading off like a Miss World line-up, the extra protection of his triple-lined coffin. The commentator reminded us awedly that he would soon be lying in 'the earth, the bare earth'; and sure enough, a dozen maître d's in white ties and frock coats arrived to carry the trapezoid box off to its last resting-place beneath the tranquil gaze of a Donatello madonna, a bare Donatello madonna. It must have been the austerity of it all that made everyone in St Peter's applaud as the funeral procession departed.

Otherwise, there were lots of repeats. Some argued that the *Commonwealth Games* (BBC-1) were a repeat; and there was certainly a measure of *déjà entendu* about Coleman and Pickering. 'And Jane Colebrook right *out* of this one,' David bellowed in an *fff* version of his wonn-nil voice; whereupon plucky Jane put in a splendid sprint and wound up with the bronze medal. It was all too uncomfortably reminiscent of *l'affaire Sherwood* ('And who cares who's third?' as Hemery took his Mexico gold); and, perhaps to head this memory off, David at once rounded on Jane for sloppy tactics. He is currently running into the right hysterical form for the start of the football season, and even tried to make out that Rono's thrilling and gratifying 5,000 metres victory was a bit spoilsport: '*But,* Rono's ruined the race – it would have been a tremendous race if he hadn't been there.' And, of course, if the second Kenyan hadn't been there, England would have won gold *and* silver medals. In fact, if *all* the foreigners had stayed at home (or at least the very fast ones) . . . Meanwhile, Ron Pickering continued to overheat as usual. The mockery of my confrères has chided him out of saying 'he's pulling out the big one' and even (I heard it myself once) 'he's whacking in the big one'; but the NVLA will cut off his tail with a carving-knife for his new, shameless variant. 'If she hits the board and bangs a big one, that'll put her in the bronze medal position.' More fun than the missionary position, they tell me.

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Films

John Coleman

Village Voices

Between the Lines (AA) *Screen on the Hill*
Backroads and **Love Letters from Teralba Road** *Scala*
Beauty and the Beast (U) *Classic 2, Oxford Street*
Lola Montès (A) *Camden Plaza*

Joan Micklin Silver's first feature was the affectionate *Hester Street,* set back in the Jewish ghetto on New York's Lower East Side in 1896: at once the portrait of a disrupted immigrant family and of a whole, bustling community, it had a pursuable story-line on which to hang a richness of detail. It is considerably harder to get one's bearings with her second film, *Between the Lines,* at least for the first reel or so, and you are hereby warned. The presence of Robert Altman at his most picaresque may be felt and Altman is a dangerous master in his *Nashville* vein. This caveat duly entered, I must insist there are pleasant rewards for the persistent. In Mrs Silver's own good time, we get to know and identify her principals – the young staff of *Mainline,* a contemporary Boston Back Bay weekly paper, originally underground but now on the threshold of respectability and profit – as well as latching on readily enough to the plot: the paper is about to be bought up by a new publisher with other strings to his bow and, all too probably, other ideas. There may be a certain parallel here with the history of the *Village Voice* (for which Mrs Silver has written articles): certainly her new screenplay was provided by Fred Barron, a Boston reporter with experience of alternative newspapers. It rings true, in an amiable way, playing up the chances for comedy, minimising the bad moments, shrugging – rather – when the take-over becomes a reality. I suppose part of me could have done with a harsher touch: and yet I was beguiled.

After all, the scattered interest is not so much on the stories the staff are currently working at (an interview with a stripper; a maverick attempt by an ambitious no-talent cub reporter to get the dirt on a villainous record-pirate – he's beaten up for his pains; a possible hospital scandal item not followed up: *that* is all we are offered of the nitty-gritty) as on the interlocking stories of the staff themselves, one or two somewhat smug, others regretful for the old, muck-raising days. Michael is compiling a book at home, which he eventually sells, while his woman Laura seethes as one of *Mainline's* top writers: in the end, she ruefully settles for New York with him. Harry (John Heard), the paper's real ace, is having an in-and-out affair with career-bent photographer Abbie (Lindsay Crouse, fine, a kind of Anne Baxter for the Seventies); Stanley, bow-tied, bespectacled, is everyone's idea of a space-seller and general pain; Lynn is the sweet dogsbody and secretary, enraging Stanley when she dates black Ahmed; Max (Jeff Goldblum), tall, Jewish, unputdownable, seems to write about rock and proposes they send him to the Cannes Film Festival – fat chance, as he well knows.

The movie skims impressionistically along, defying firm description, creating its laughs and winces en route to the crunch, when Harry's fired, some leave, some don't. David, the cub, takes a phoned small ad for 'girl with excessive amount of body hair, especially on her arms'; Max surreally picks up pennies lecturing gullible, note-taking girls on Rock, citing Wallace Stevens, talking of the 'hither' and 'thither' of it all, dictating his phone-number in one drastic rush of gobbledygook – he also has a nice interlude in the office, outfacing a mad, instant artist who wants to be interviewed by joining him in wrecking the place and naming the wreckage: 'Kicked Coffee Machine', 'Wall Removed with Fist and Fingers', 'Stanley Exposed', and so on. There is a big party scene which unites most of them and, jigsaw-like, almost achieves the larger picture of their collective and individual rancours, hopes, jealousies. At the very end, Max is found coolly bumming a drink from a stranger in a bar, smiling away, indestructable. Grin and bear it? There are worse messages, should you need one.

A double-bill from Australia has the disconcerting effect of making one realise how articulate, even *tidy* are the dialogues and apparent bitterness of Mrs Silver's movie. Phillip Noyce's widely touted *Newsfront* will be opening this year's London Film Festival. Meanwhile, we have his 60-minute debut, *Backroads* ('screenplay by John Emery, plus the director and cast'), a forceful account of a roughneck, calamitous drive in a stolen car from the desert outback of New South Wales to the coast. After the pretentious ambiguities of Peter Weir's use of aboriginal customs in *The Last Wave,* it is refreshing to find an aboriginal activist, Gary Foley, playing an utterly disillusioned native of the same forename in a context which emphasises the plight of blacks reduced to living in shanty-towns or Reserves. One bad day, a bearded white drop-out invites Gary to help him pinch a car. They filch clothes and booze at brief stopovers, pick up Gary's alcoholic uncle Joe from a tin-shed Reserve, switch licence plates and paint the car yellow. A French hitch-hiker and a sleazy girl from a gas station travel with them for a while, soon unabashedly screwing away in the back. Joe drinks and plays the guitar. The doomed idyll ferries over a strong sense of the unreeling, dusty landscape (camera: Russell Boyd). Much more, it lives in the uneasy exchanges between Gary and Jack, who at first trots out the unthinking white clichés about 'darkies' and 'wogs' but thaws and learns a bit as they hurtle on. There is some subtlety in Gary's presentation: he is resigned, after a fashion – 'Let them think they have the upper hand,' he tells the Frenchman – and has had a white wife. They reach the sea, the cops close in, the final shoot-out. It is a blunt, extreme work of informed pessimism. There are times when what's said is unnecessarily hard to make out: realism can go too far.

Love Letters from Teralba Road, directed and written by Stephen Wallace, runs 50 raw minutes and is based on some letters Wallace found in a rented flat. About a brutish husband, a storeman in Newcastle, and his attempts to get back with his fed-up wife, who has left him for her drinking dad and younger sister in Sydney, it uses a lot of voice-over for the husband's stream of letters, which are ironically communicative in a way 'your ever-loving Len' can never be when they meet. Wallace presents his bleak, everyday dilemma relentlessly: his stunted couple, after an unsuccessful meeting, are left on a question mark, emotional drifters.

Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1945) is quite fondly remembered as possessing a manner of magic and sunniness lacking in Fielder Cook's version of the fairy-tale. The mystery here is rather why it was made, unless George C. Scott was desperate to team up again on screen with his wife, Trish Van Devere. This Beast has a snout, tusks and plastic hoofs, quotes Aristotle, and contrives less pathos than Jean Marais' pussy-cat monster. Miss Van Devere is now schoolmarmish, now near-moronic, with a penchant for hide-and-seek and swings. Scraps of tart dialogue and a lovely, surely unintended end when Belle looks damn near discountenanced on finding it was only old George, tummy at attention, all the time.

As for the revived *Lola Montès* (meant to be 140 minutes, shown over here cut to 90, now 110 at the Camden Plaza), the colour print is not too hot and – whatever its staunch

THE STATE OF FICTION
A SYMPOSIUM

with contributions from A. Alvarez, Brian Aldiss, Kingsley Amis, Martin Amis, Paul Bailey, J.G. Ballard, A.L. Barker, Stan Barstow, David Benedictus, Malcolm Bradbury, Melvyn Bragg, John Braine, Christine Brooke-Rose, Jeremy Brooks, Brigid Brophy, A.S. Byatt, Angela Carter, Isabel Colegate, William Cooper, Robert Coover, Elaine Feinstein, Eva Figes, Nicolas Freeling, Giles Gordon, Patricia Highsmith, Michael Holroyd, Dan Jacobson, Diane Johnson, Jennifer Johnston, Gabriel Josipovici, Mervyn Jones, Francis King, David Lodge, Ian McEwan, Olivia Manning, Stanley Middleton, Brian Moore, Helen Muir, Edna O'Brien, Julia O'Faolain, David Plante, Barbara Pym, Frederic Raphael, Piers Paul Read, Alan Ross, Alan Sillitoe, Julian Symons, Emma Tennant, Paul Theroux, Anthony Thwaite, William Trevor, Peter Vansittart, Auberon Waugh, Raymond Williams, Angus Wilson, A.N. Wilson.

in the summer issue of

THE NEW REVIEW

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adherents may claim – the camera motions *are* often fussy and the decors stifling. Seeing it again, I most enjoyed the flashback from the circus to Lola (dolly Martine Carol) with the King of Bavaria (Anton Walbrook at his suave weariest): the palace-wide search for a needle and thread and the choice of a painter who would take longest to do Lola's portrait. Ustinov's ringmaster still stands out, a solicitous near-bully, torn between old love and professional callousness: 'Higher, Lola, higher!'

Music

Andrew Clements

Cordon Sanitaire

The Proms *Royal Albert Hall/Radio 3*

Three weeks of the 84th Proms season have produced less than a handful of works that merit a mention. This year's programmes have been widely criticised for their lack of lustre – few outstanding performers, too many concerts obviously transplanted from the last South Bank season, a sprinkling of predictable novelties. Doubtless a purely statistical analysis would prove that the percentage of works by living composers is just as high as in any recent year; but this time more than ever they have been surrounded by a *cordon sanitaire* – banished to the satellite venues of the Roundhouse and Hammersmith's Riverside Studios, so that the main series of orchestral concerts might remain unsullied.

At first glance that policy seems plausible. Much contemporary music is written for ensembles rather than the standard symphony orchestra (if there be such a thing); the likely audiences would fill the Roundhouse and be lost in the Albert Hall. But London already hears plenty of small-scale modern repertory throughout the year: as last month's St Bartholomew's festival showed, there is almost an embarrassment of highly accomplished ensembles putting on just that sort of event. What we do lack is precisely the kind of opportunity the Proms could provide: to hear contemporary orchestral music played by an orchestra (the BBC Symphony) that is expert at unravelling the most complex of scores. Two of this year's more pertinent musical anniversaries – Elliott Carter's 70th birthday and Karlheinz Stockhausen's 50th – could have furnished the justification, were it needed; yet neither composer is represented this year by any of his orchestral works.

To be fair, the end of the season promises to be more interesting than the beginning, with the British premiere of Tippett's Fourth Symphony and a second chance to hear Edward Cowie's Piano Concerto; but the recent orchestral music heard so far has been decidedly conservative in its outlook. Maxwell Davies's Symphony I discussed at the time of its first performance last February, but three other works were entirely unfamiliar. Two of them may be summarily dispatched. Iain Hamilton's *Scene: Cleopatra* is the latest in a sequence of pieces that stem from his work on a yet-to-be-performed opera. Each seems more empty than its predecessor: the lush 'Mediterranean' orchestration obscures a mixture of banal dramatic gestures and commonplace invention. Unfortunately it could not also obliterate the embarrassingly prosaic text. Andrzej Panufnik's *Sinfonia di Sfere* can be admired for its craftsmanship and the restraint shown in the use of the full orchestra, but after another hearing the musical substance seems pretty thin.

The first performance of Robin Holloway's *Romanza* for violin and small orchestra was altogether much more worthwhile. Born in 1943, Holloway seems to me one of the most interesting of the younger British composers. His acute intelligence, as shown in his critical writings, is unquestionable, but until now his music has suggested a curiously different creative personality. 'One is what one assimilates', he once observed, and at times he's seemed to shelter behind a rich harmonic palette and gestural repertoire drawn from the 19th-century romantic composers. At the same time, a preoccupation with Wallace Stevens added yet another layer. More recently he has produced some spare, neoclassical pieces which have revealed the equal and complementary importance of Stravinsky to his musical thinking.

Without being unduly peripatetic, it's difficult to keep up with the output of so prodigious a composer as Holloway. But the title and the music of the new *Romanza* suggest a decisive return to romanticism, now informed by a clarity and directness that is the result of the neoclassical experiments. Essentially it's a miniaturised violin concerto, the four movements interwoven and compressed into a single span broadly contrasting lyrical and *scherzando* passages – the two types of bravura writing most suited to the violin. The ripeness of the harmony, hinting at traditional tonal usages yet simultaneously contradicting and sharpening them, and the crystalline orchestration create a quite individual sound world. The cast of the melodies (played in a rather brittle fashion, it seemed, by Erich Gruenberg with the English Chamber Orchestra under Simon Rattle) and the harmonic control are clearly derived ultimately from 19th-century models, and the work could easily have become just a catalogue of violinistic gestures; a composer with less sense of purpose would have extended the ideas into a much longer and correspondingly more rambling piece. That the *Romanza* is as beautifully proportioned as it is, represents perhaps the most complete fulfilment so far of its composer's promise.

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ARTHUR KOESTLER's most recent work was *Janus: a Summing Up* (Hutchinson).

IAN HAMILTON is editor of the *New Review* and author of *The Visit* (Faber).

PETER PORTER's most recent collection of poems was *The Cost of Seriousness*.

PETER CONRAD's *Shandyism* was published last month by Blackwell.

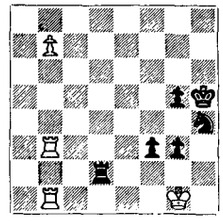
JOHN COLEMAN has just won first prize in the *Evening News* short story competition.

Tony Miles

Chess

No 96 **Post-mortem on Problem 89**

In response to public demand, a further post-mortem on problem 89 (see diagram):



After 1.P-N8=Q Black wins by 1 . . .P-B7ch; 2.K-R1, P-N7ch; 3.K-R2, P-N8=Qch; 4.RxQ, N-B6ch! (Not 4 . . .P-B8=Qch; 5.K-N3? N-B4mate because of 5.K-R1!) 5.K-R3, P-N5ch! etc mating, as in my solution. The problems arise after 1.R-KB1, which I gave as drawing. When setting the position I had the feeling that White really shouldn't survive, but I was unable to prove my suspicion and so trusted the East European analysis. There are numerous near misses e.g. 1.R-KB1, R-N7ch; 2.K-R1, P-B7; 3.RxNP! RxR; 4.P-N8=Q! or 1.R-KB1, P-B7ch; 2.RxP! or 1.R-KB1, R-N7ch; 2.K-R1, R-R7ch; 3.K-N1, P-N7; 4.R(1)-N1 or 1.R-KB1,P-N7; 2.R(3)-N1! Finally, Mr J D Taylor has discovered what appears to be the only way for Black to win:— 1.R-KB1, R-N7ch; 2.K-R1, R-K7!! with the following lines:—

(a) 3.P-N8=Q, P-N7ch; 4.K-N1, P-B7ch! 5.K-R2 (or 5.RxP, R-K8ch mates) P-N8=Qch; 6.RxQ, N-B6ch! winning as in the game.

(b) 3.R(3)xP, P-N7ch; 4.K-N1, PxR=Qch; 5.KxQ, R-QN7; 6.R-B7. P-N5 wins.

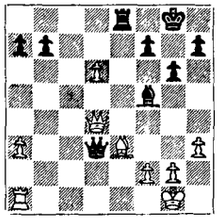
(c) 3.R(1)xP, R-K8ch mates.

(d) 3.R-KN1, R-R7mate.

(e) 3.R(1)-QN1 (or elsewhere on the first rank) P-N7ch; 4.K-R2. P-B7 and White is helpless (5.P-N8=Q, P-N8=Qch; 6.RxQ, N-B6ch! as usual).

(f) 3.R(3)-N1, P-N7ch; 4.K-N1, PxR=Qch; 5.KxQ, N-B4!! (Now we see the real point of 2 . . .R-K7!!) 6.P-N8=Q (else N-N6ch and R-N7mate) N-K6ch; 7.K-N1, P-B7ch; 8.K-R1, R-K8ch; 9.K-R2, N-N5ch! 10.K-N3, P-B8=Q and wins (11.Q-R8ch, N-R3; or 11.Q-K8ch, RxQ etc). Lastly (g) 3.K-N1, P-N7! transposes to one of the above lines. A superb piece of analysis but unfortunately too late for the competition!

June Prizewinners: First–J. W. Cornfortt and J. D. Taylor (anyway!), £15 each; Third–H. Garfath Garfath and A. J. Sobey, £7.50 each; Consolation prizes to S. Sahasrabudhe and V. P. Ram Mohan, £2 each and a special prize (£1) to Henry P. Ewald Jnr.



Problem 96

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 30 August.

Solution to Problem 94

1 . . . RxP! 2.QxR (others also lose) QxPch! 3.RxQ, N-R6ch; 4.K-B1, BxRch; 5.KxB,NxQch winning two pawns and the game.

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Weekend Competition

No 2528 Set by Paddy Hammer

Saatchi and Saatchi are handling the soap-powder sale of Mrs Thatcher and the Tory party at the next election. Anticipate their glib copy, please, by 1 September; or imagine what they would do for any other party or party leader. Anything from a three-word slogan up to a maximum of 150 words: it may even land you a job.

Result of No 2525 Set by E. O. parrott

Elvis Presley once asked to join the FBI. We asked you to write lyrics for this and similar unlikely applications.

Report by Little Keith

Mit Der Grosse Jeff aus his holidays in Heidelberg (trinken and fressen), we were quite unable to judge Susan Llewellyn's almost certainly witty Deutsche entry. So just a highly commended to her, und the same to Herr J. P. Davey. Sieben smacking Pfunde to die lucky winners. Auf wiedersehen.

CIA,
All these commies seemed so far away,
Now it looks as though they're here
to stay,
Oh, let me join the CIA.
Suddenly,
I am twice the man I used to be,
There's a shadow tracking after me,
Oh, CIA, write hurriedly.
Why I couldn't spy, the FBI
Just wouldn't say.
I said something wrong,
Now I want the CIA-ayayay.
CIA,
Love was just an easy game to play,
Now I need a gun to hide away,
Oh, let me join the CIA.

BILL GREENWELL

I'll gatecrash Colditz in the Spring again;
Drop uninvited from an aeroplane,
Or gain admittance by means subterrane,
When I join SOE.

And in the compound by the
searchlight's glow
I'll hear your signals on the radio;
Your spies will tell me all I want to
know,
When I join SOE.

At dress rehearsals for our great escape
I'll garb each inmate with
knee-boots and cape;
Those dowdy guards will only stand
and gape,
When I join SOE.

Then if the Nazi commandant tells me
That he's seen *Perchance* or *King's*
Rhapsody
I'll give him tickets for a matinee,
If he joins SOE.

BARRY ANTHONY

How many men must a man turn in
Before he can cease to cadge?
How many times must he punish sin
Before you hand him a G Man badge?
How many dope fiends will it take
till you know
My application you just cannot dodge?
Bureau do not lie, look me straight
in the eye,
I'm on offer to the FBI.

How many times must I beg for a chance
Before you let me come in?
When can I try on a G Man's pants?
(Size very small and thin)
Will it take quite some time before
you all know
I'm in the grip of a Federal romance?
Bureau do not lie, look me straight
in the eye,
I'm on offer to the FBI.

ROY KELLY

I'll be your tool,
Ever cute, ever cool,
Till each gin-plied fool'll drool
The vital gen.

You'll find that I,
Super-doll, super-spy,
Can with Mata Hari vie
In rousing yen.

Clad only in Chanel and furs,
I shall prove such a hot *allumeuse*
That, sooner or later, I'll trip
every traitor –
With a bed-plan that never errs.

I'll slyly use
Every wile, every ruse,
Sure that sex or booze unscrews
The hearts of men.

RODDY REDDING

When I'm around the consulate,
I see the consul working late,
But he's not working with his mate,
When I'm cleaning windows.

In the Embassy canteen,
The People's Commissar I've seen,
He doesn't keep the Party clean,
When I'm cleaning windows.

The military attachés too,
Play games that would astonish you,
You won't believe the things they do,
When I'm cleaning windows.

An agent's job's the one for me,
I'll tell you all the things I see,
And what is more, I'll do it free.
When I'm cleaning windows.

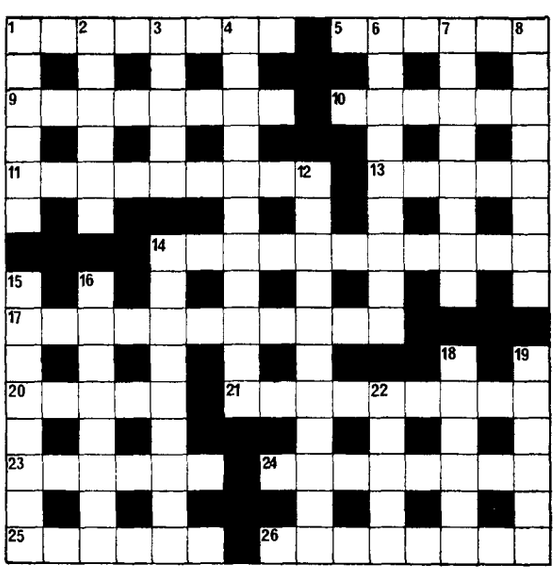
JOHN STANLEY

Ah, look at all the swindling people.
Ah, look at all the swindling people.
Eleanor Rigby picks up a man in a pub
and takes him back home,
Takes out her comb,
Then lets her hair down, wearing a smile
that shows she's an amateur whore,
Offers him more.
All the swindling people, oh why don't
we find them?
All the swindling people, oh why don't
we find them?
Sharon McKenzie says on her form that
of course she is living alone.
How much is known?
Let us go peeping when she is sleeping the
night when there's somebody's there.
Then we will care.
All the swindling people,
why don't we clobber them?
All the swindling people, why don't
we spy on them?

PAT BLACKFORD

Weekend Crossword 1273

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1273, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 29 August.



ACROSS

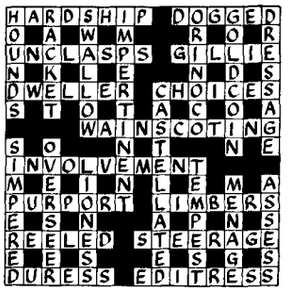
1. Places which are not profound a saint renders holy (8).
5. Weighs possibly a hundred less (6).
9. Slightly depend on wild game (8).
10. Masculine rage when there is poor accommodation for baby (6).
11. Weapons for a belligerent one among males (9).
13. Girl married with a song (5).
14. Pale and pinched as Thomas looks (11).
17. Age groups which have a share in characteristic transmitters (11).
20. In home games it comes last (5).
21. Puzzling version of mating in melted ice (9).
23. Double your money for a hero in pictures (6).
24. Unique as ruling in disorder (8).
25. Purifies the woman standing before us (6).
26. Bends over in a punishment for schoolboys (8).

DOWN

1. It is found in identical material (6).
2. 'Better dwell in the midst of ——' (Cowper) (6).
3. Blake's modest dame (5).
4. Flesh may be seen and low wit, giving crude acknowledgement of females (11).
6. Places of work which may make men social (9).
7. Accident in delivery? (8).
8. Cried having spent the morning in writing (8).
12. Belief in taking in liquid on principle (11).
14. Appropriate flower when a vehicle runs over people (9).
15. One who does not believe in coasting freely (8).
16. Feelers put out before holding a girl up (8).
18. Illegally acquired change is given for pound notes (6).
19. Fruit as being without seed (6).
22. The tycoon has only a short time to pull up (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1271



Prizewinners to No 1271

C.J. Ralphs (Leeds)
M. Collins (Wembley)
D.C. Bayliss (Hong Kong)

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Application forms obtainable from and returnable to **MR P. E. JOHN, HEADMASTER, MOUNT TAMAR SCHOOL, ROW LANE, HIGHER ST, BUDEAUX, PLYMOUTH, as soon as possible**

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

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Salary within the range £3,517-£4,669 per annum inclusive of London Weighting and supplements.

Write for further details, enclosing a medium sized self-addressed envelope, to the Personnel Officer, to whom applications should be submitted by 1 September 1978.

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Television Scheduling Officer

The Independent Broadcasting Authority has a vacancy at its Knightsbridge Headquarters for a post at middle management level which calls for a variety of attributes, both practical and personal.

The main function of the Television Scheduling Officer will be the analysis and supervision of the ITV schedules; the provision of an information service for senior management and Members of the Authority on programme schedules, information and statistics; the administration of the Authority's television monitoring panels; and the participation in defining the Television Division's computer needs. Additionally there will be a requirement to deputise for the senior officer in this field of activity; to liaise with the Authority's Regional Offices and with the independent programme companies; and to ensure liaison with other internal departments such as that concerned with audience research.

Candidates (male or female) should be of degree standard or be able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge. They should be capable of forming sound programme judgements and of lucid expression both written and oral. It would be useful had they had experience of handling statistics and information; and the ability to instigate and action accurate factual reports is vital. It is likely that the successful candidate will have had at least five years' experience in the television industry, preferably in the programme planning and/or production field.

The Television Scheduling Officer has a staff of seven to ten people so that the ability to direct and lead a specialised team is essential.

The salary for this post will be within the range £6366 to £7236 (including all supplements), although a general increase in salaries is currently under discussion.

IBA INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

Please make written application giving some detail of background and experience to the Personnel Officer, Independent Broadcasting Authority, 70 Brompton Road, London SW3 1EY, by not later than 4th September, 1978.

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Info 836 5332. 'Coriolanus', Strindberg's 'The Dance of Death' and last perfs Steve Gooch's 'The Woman-Pirates Ann Bonney and Mary Read' in repertoire (see daily press for dates and times). Booking now for 'As You Like It' (opens 4 Sept.). RSC also at The Warehouse in Peter Flannery's 'Savage Amusement' and Pete Atkin's 'A & R'.

CHICHESTER. 0243 81312. 18, 22, 23, 24, 25 & 26 Aug. at 7.0, 19 Aug. at 2.0 'Look After Lulu'. 19 & 21 Aug. at 7.0, 24 & 26 Aug. at 2.0 'The Aspern Papers'.

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